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## The Modern Greek Literary Tradition in the Major Novels of Nikos Kazantzakis

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The Modern Greek Literary Tradition  
in the Major Novels of Nikos Kazantzakis

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## Abstract

This doctoral thesis presents a comprehensive analysis of the novels of Kazantzakis' maturity in relation to Modern Greek literature. The extent of Kazantzakis' reading is explored as well as the views that he expressed in letters, essays and interviews on texts from the epic of *Διγενής Ακρίτης* up to works of the Generation of the Thirties. When Kazantzakis wrote his major novels, he had a wide knowledge of the Modern Greek literary tradition and contemporary literature. The fruits of his engagement with Modern Greek literature are found in his own literary production. The novels that are studied are *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά*, *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται*, *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης (Ελευτερία ή Θάνατος)* and *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός*. The analysis detects the intertextual markers and illustrates the methods that are employed linking the novels' characters, themes, settings and stories with previous Modern Greek texts. A wide range of literary works is evoked or organically incorporated into the plot of the novels: folk poetry of the Akritic cycle, Cretan folk songs, the literature of the Cretan Renaissance, the poetry of Solomos, Palamas and Sikelianos, the ethnographic novellas and short stories of Kondylakis and Vizyinos, fiction by Myrivilis, Prevelakis and Kosmas Politis. Kazantzakis' novels hold a pivotal place in the history of Modern Greek literature and, as this thesis proposes, it is also the Modern Greek literary tradition that constitutes an essential component of his fiction.

## Introduction

The exploration of the connection of Nikos Kazantzakis' major novels with the Modern Greek literary tradition is the subject matter of the current doctoral thesis. The extent of the author's engagement with Modern Greek literature is examined as well as the intertextual relationship of his major novels with Modern Greek literature from the folk poetry of the Akritic cycle and the fall of Constantinople in the 15th century up to the literature of the 1940s. The markers that indicate the linking of the novels with preceding texts of Modern Greek literature are investigated as well as the authors, periods and works with which the novels are connected attempting to interpret the function of their association.

The chief research questions that this thesis addresses and to which it attempts to respond are the following: what was the extent of the engagement and knowledge of Kazantzakis as a reader of Modern Greek literature? What critical comments did he express with regard to works of the Modern Greek literary tradition and which criteria did he apply for their assessment? How are Kazantzakis' major novels connected with previous Modern Greek texts? With which texts, authors and periods of the Modern Greek literary tradition are the novels linked and how does the recognition of the intertextual relationship with the anterior literature sheds fresh light upon Kazantzakis' work?

The methodology that has been employed in order to examine the above research questions is first an exploration of Kazantzakis' reading and extra-textual comments about Modern Greek literary texts. An overview of his reading and critical comments is offered in order to shed light on the extent of his familiarity with it. For

the analysis of Kazantzakis' engagement with Modern Greek literature as a reader and the examination of his critical views about it material is gleaned from Kazantzakis' essays, interviews, and letters from 1902 until the 1950s, some of which are currently unpublished or less known. They derive from the research I conducted at the archive of the author at Kazantzakis Museum, his library at the Historical Museum of Crete as well as Prevelakis archive at the library of the University of Crete.

Then, the intertextual connection of the novels with previous texts is analysed. The major novels that are studied in the thesis are: *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά*, *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται*, *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης*, and *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός*. Kazantzakis commenced and completed his literary career as a novelist. In the meantime, he produced works that belong to a wide variety of genres: poetry, philosophy, essays, plays, travel literature, and translations. He was critically acclaimed at an international level after writing the novel *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* between 1941 and 1943 which marked the beginning of the mature phase of his literary production. *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται*, *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης*, and *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* were the major novels that followed. These novels are chosen to be studied on the grounds that they were produced after Kazantzakis had acquired a wide knowledge of the Modern Greek literary tradition and contemporary literature as a reader of it. Furthermore, the period when he wrote his major novels succeeded and coincided with the breakthrough that Modern Greek literature saw after the appearance and establishment of the writers that belong to the Generation of the Thirties.

The analysis focuses on the markers that signalise the intertexts and indicate their manifold linking with previous texts. It explores the ways of their interconnection on the level of structure and content in terms of the topics, characters,

their words and actions, places and times. The development of a single episode or character in the unfolding of the plot may be characterised by a merging of intertexts. Moreover, the intertextual relationships are detected in structural positions of the novels from the beginning, the middle and the end. Close readings of the novels in parallel with anterior Modern Greek texts are presented so as to elucidate the ways and techniques of their connection. Interpretations of the effect of the intertextual linking are also presented aiming to examine how the novels acquire fresh meaning when the intertext is detected.

Terms that are included in this thesis and require elucidation will at this point be explicated. The term *intertextuality* concerns the novels' interrelation to previous texts. *Intertext* is perceived as the anterior text with which the novel is connected and it may have an overt or covert presence in the novel. The intertextual connection is activated through markers that may make the association apparent or obscure. Ziva Ben-Porat in the article "The poetics of allusion" defines literary allusion as "a device for the simultaneous activation of two texts. The activation is achieved through the manipulation of a special signal: a sign (simple or complex) in a given text characterized by an additional larger "referent". This referent is always an independent text. The simultaneous activation of the two texts thus connected results in the formation of intertextual patterns whose nature cannot be predetermined".<sup>1</sup> The marker activates elements from the evoked text. It should also be noted that the intertext may differ from the version of a theme. Intertextuality exists when two texts correspond to each other whether they share a common theme or not. An important factor that differentiates the intertext from the version of a theme is the presence or the absence of a key-word. In the case when there is a correspondent there is also

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<sup>1</sup> Ben-Porat 1976: 107-108.

material present from the previous text and also components that have been substituted in the text.<sup>2</sup> This remains *praesens in absentia* and therefore an important component of the text is to be found outside of its margins.

The term *quotation* is perceived as the reproduction of textual material from a previous work in the novels. It has an explicit character and it is manifested through the use of quotation marks or italics. It may occur with or without specific references to the work from which it derives. *Reference* concerns the cases when a literary work's title or the author's name are specifically mentioned. *Allusion* also pertains to the reproduction of material from a preceding text but it is more elusive in comparison to the quotation. The novel alludes to an antecedent text in an implicit manner and it is connected to it in subtle ways that are justified and illuminated when the intertext is recognised. Allusion suggests a wordplay as the etymology of the word implies which derives from the Latin *ad-ludere* (play). In many cases, as the textual material passes from the pretext into the novels it does not remain unchanged but there are alterations (additions, subtractions, substitutions) on a phonological, morphological, syntactic and textual level.<sup>3</sup>

At the heart of this thesis lies the concept of intertextuality which develops the premise that each text is part of a network of interconnections with other texts which are its intertexts. Although the theoretical term intertextuality derives from the late 1960s, as a practice it is an essential and fundamental part of literature since ancient times. Every work is inscribed in a previous heritage of literature and indicates its connection to a tradition. T. S. Eliot in the influential essay "Tradition and the individual talent" elaborated on the concept of tradition and individuality and also on

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<sup>2</sup> See Riffaterre 1990: 74-77.

<sup>3</sup> See Plett 1991: 9-10.



criticism and poetics.<sup>4</sup> According to Eliot, the literary tradition is not inherited but it is gained through great labour on behalf of the author.<sup>5</sup> It includes a historical sense where the past and the present coexist. The writer, as Eliot argued, is compelled to encompass the literature from the past until his own time as if it was in a simultaneous order and this historical sense makes the writer traditional and at the same time contemporary.

The relationship of an author's work with the previous literature has been treated by a variety of theoretical schools and theorists. A brief overview of them will be presented in the subsequent paragraphs. In the nineteenth century the concept of influence prevailed. The notion of influence refers to the relations of transmission from an anterior text to a posterior one. There have been long debates and criticism about influence studies mainly for valorising the literary predecessor who is presented as a source.<sup>6</sup> In 1973 Harold Bloom in the book *The Anxiety of Influence* developed a psychoanalytical approach.<sup>7</sup> According to Bloom the author's anxiety of influence is related to the notion that everything has been written before him and that his own work possesses a state of belatedness. Bloom argues that a precursor might exert anxiety of influence on a new poet even if the latter has not read his work. He offers as an example the work of Shakespeare, whose worldview and ideology have shaped culture after him to such an extent that people are familiar with features of Shakespeare's work even if they have not read it. The strong poet, in Bloom's view, writes because he has read poems that he admires so intensively that he wants to imitate and exceed them. According to Bloom, the new poet differentiates himself

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<sup>4</sup> Eliot 1960: 47-59.

<sup>5</sup> Eliot 1960: 49.

<sup>6</sup> Morgan 1985: 2-3. For a discussion of influence studies in relation to the emergence of the theories of intertextuality see Clayton & Rothstein 1991: 3-36.

<sup>7</sup> Bloom 1997.

from the source-text by misreading it. In *The Anxiety of Influence* Bloom has classified this misreading in six stages which are “revisionary ratios”: 1) “clinamen”, which is a correction of the precursor’s poem, 2) “tessera”, where the new poet completes the poem and gives it another sense, 3) “kenosis”, which is a repetition, 4) “daemonization”, where the new poet undermines the uniqueness of the earlier work, 5) “askesis”, which Bloom describes as the poet’s “clearest victory in wrestling with the mighty dead”<sup>8</sup> and 6) “apophrades” or the return of the dead when the precursor poets return to the strong poet, something that shows their persistence in the poet.

The theory of intertextuality views the text as a part of a network of textual relations. Its meaning is traced in the realm between the text and the other texts to which it refers and connects. The origins of the theory of intertextuality are detected in twentieth century linguistics and more particularly in the work of Ferdinand de Saussure.<sup>9</sup> From Saussure’s analysis of the systematic features of language emerges the relational character of meaning and therefore texts. What is more, intertextuality originates from the theory of Mikhail Bakhtin about language and literature. In his study *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics* Bakhtin argued that novels such as those of Fyodor Dostoevsky do not exhibit a homogenous or “monologic” representation of reality but they include a plurality of independent and unmerged voices that coexist and interact in terms of polyphony. Bakhtin called this kind of novel “polyphonic”.<sup>10</sup> He also developed the theory of “dialogism” whose basic assumption is that a message is uttered as a response to another utterance and it is addressed to a prospective speaker. An utterance does not occur in isolation and it does not bear a single message. According to Bakhtin, the language is the environment in which

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<sup>8</sup> Bloom 1997: 116.

<sup>9</sup> See Allen 2000: 8-14.

<sup>10</sup> Bakhtin 1984a: 6.

multiple meanings and voices are conveyed and merged. The text engages in a network of meanings, systems and relations with other texts. Bakhtin suggested that in each character two voices are heard: that of the author and that of the character and divided “dialogism” into three major categories. In Bakhtin’s own words: “All devices in the novel for creating the image of a language may be reduced to three basic categories: 1) hybridizations, 2) the dialogized interrelation of languages and 3) pure dialogues”.<sup>11</sup> What also interests us for the exploration of the intertextual nature of Kazantzakis’ novels in Bakhtin’s theory, is his assessment of the novel as the genre par excellence that has a dialogic form. Bakhtin argued that the novel is the only genre that can achieve a truly dialogic nature. In the novel the discourses are responses to previous responses. For Bakhtin lyric poetry conveys a single perspective in the one voice that is expressed whereas in the novel there is not a single authoritative voice and it is thus closer to the everyday speech which encompasses a variety of discourses. According to Bakhtin, the novel due to its dialogic nature incorporates a variety of genres. Moreover, the features of these genres are preserved as they are transferred to the novel:

The novel permits the incorporation of various genres, both artistic (inserted short stories, lyrical songs, poems, dramatic scenes, etc.) and extra-artistic (everyday, rhetorical, scholarly, religious genres and others). In principle, any genre could be included in the construction of the novel, and in fact it is difficult to find any genres that have not at some point been incorporated into a novel by someone. Such incorporated genres usually preserve within the novel their own structural integrity and independence, as well as their own linguistic and stylistic peculiarities.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Bakhtin 1996: 358.

<sup>12</sup> Bakhtin 1996: 320-321.

In the late 1960s Julia Kristeva rediscovered the work of Bakhtin and coined the term intertextuality.<sup>13</sup> In “Word, dialogue and novel” she presented Bakhtin’s *Rabelais and his World* and *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*. According to Kristeva a text is not an isolated unit and it is a space where several utterances taken from other texts interconnect.<sup>14</sup> Kristeva made a distinction between the horizontal and vertical dimensions of language. On the horizontal axis the text refers to the subject and the addressee, while the vertical axis pertains to the anterior or synchronic literature.<sup>15</sup> For Kristeva a text has references in a context that is historical, social, and intertextual. With regard to social references Kristeva used the term “ideologeme”, which represents the reception of a meaning outside the text.<sup>16</sup>

The work of Roland Barthes stresses the presence of a subject that traces the intertextual relations. For Barthes readers are constantly drawn to new connections of texts and therefore the author cannot be the factor of the meaning that the readers derive from the text. Barthes has characterised this phenomenon as the “death of the Author”.<sup>17</sup> In *S/Z* Barthes viewed intertextuality as a domain of multidisciplinary relations and shifted attention to the reader who discovers the text whereas the author is considered as a collection of intertexts.<sup>18</sup>

The reception theory which was developed in the late 1960s focuses on the relationship of the text with its addressee, the reader. Wolfgang Iser argued that the interpretation of the text is based on the background of the reader and the historical circumstances. According to Iser “the interpreter’s task should be to elucidate the

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<sup>13</sup> Kristeva 1980: 36-91.

<sup>14</sup> Kristeva 1980: 36.

<sup>15</sup> Kristeva 1980: 66.

<sup>16</sup> Kristeva 1980: 37.

<sup>17</sup> Barthes 1977: 142-148.

<sup>18</sup> Barthes 1974: 211. See Morgan 1985: 18-21.

potential meanings of a text, and not to restrict himself to just one”.<sup>19</sup> In his study *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* Hans Robert Jauss made a distinction between the ideal reader or “superreader” and a “naïve reader”. Jauss suggested that the ideal reader is he who “is not only equipped with the sum total of literary historical knowledge available today, but also is capable of consciously registering every aesthetic impression and referring it back to the text’s structure of effect”.<sup>20</sup>

Gérard Genette and Michael Riffaterre argued that there are stable elements that the critic can draw from literary texts. Genette in *Palimpsests* presented five major categories of what he calls transtextuality, namely the transcendence of texts. He viewed intertextuality as a major category which covers the quotation, plagiarism and allusion and defined intertextuality as “the actual presence of one text within another”.<sup>21</sup> The second type of transtextuality is paratextuality which Genette described as the relations of the text with the title, subtitle, preface, epigraph, or illustrations. The third category is metatextuality which was defined by Genette as the relation of commentary of a text with another text. The fourth type of transtextuality is hypertextuality which covers the non-commentary relation uniting a text, which was called by Genette as the hypertext, with an earlier one, which was characterised as the hypotext.<sup>22</sup> The fifth subcategory involves architextuality which covers the relation of a text with literary genres, subgenres or conventions and was viewed by Genette as “the entire set of general categories-types of discourse, modes of enunciation, literary genres-from which emerges each singular text”.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Iser 1978: 22.

<sup>20</sup> Jauss 1982: 144.

<sup>21</sup> Genette 1997: 1-2.

<sup>22</sup> Genette 1997: 5.

<sup>23</sup> Genette 1997: 1.

Riffaterre argued that “textuality is inseparable from and founded upon intertextuality”.<sup>24</sup> He distinguished reading into two successive levels. First, an initial, linear reading takes place which is mimetic and then a second, subsequent reading which is a retroactive and hermeneutic one.<sup>25</sup> The reader is obliged to proceed from the first to the second level of reading due to “ungrammaticalities” which are inconsistencies on a referential level but are clarified once the text is reread in a preexisting pattern beyond the text. Riffaterre also presented in practice examples of intertextual readings as a close reader of texts.

Overall, intertextuality can be viewed as a continuation of the influence studies in the sense that both concepts pertain to the connection of a text with a preexisting corpus of works. Although Kazantzakis’ work is a pivotal part of Modern Greek literature, the examination of its relation to the Modern Greek literary tradition has so far been overlooked in the existing secondary bibliography. There is the paradox that although Kazantzakis is regarded as one of the major representatives of Modern Greek literature, his work is not considered to be integrally connected with it. The investigation of this area of study has been a philological desideratum. Eratosthenis Kapsomenos<sup>26</sup> and Roderick Beaton<sup>27</sup> have observed the lack of studies examining Kazantzakis’ work in the context of Modern Greek literature.

The long sojourns of the author outside the mainland of Greece and the international acclamation of his work were factors that created the misconception that Kazantzakis was not in touch with the Modern Greek literary production. Linos Politis in *A History of Modern Greek Literature* noted that Kazantzakis was a

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<sup>24</sup> Riffaterre 1980c: 625.

<sup>25</sup> Riffaterre 1980b: 4-6.

<sup>26</sup> Kapsomenos 2010a: 337-353.

<sup>27</sup> Beaton 1999: 176.

contemporary of Sikelianos and Varnalis.<sup>28</sup> He asserted that Kazantzakis had distanced himself from Modern Greek intellectual life and his work can hardly be placed in the context of Modern Greek literature.<sup>29</sup>

Dimitris Dimiroulis in “Ο Νίκος Καζαντζάκης και η γενιά του ’30, τα ίχνη της απουσίας” argued that there was no connection between the Generation of the Thirties and Kazantzakis.<sup>30</sup> He pointed out that the Generation of the Thirties appreciated Palamas, accepted Sikelianos, it was antagonistic to Cavafy but Kazantzakis was foreign to it. Dimiroulis also noted that whereas Theotokas had a positive disposition towards Kazantzakis in the years 1939-1944 as is evident in his journal, during 1945-1946 he rejected Kazantzakis and in his criticism of *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* observed that Kazantzakis expressed neither the Greek people nor Greekness.

There are studies that view Kazantzakis’ work in association with elements from Greek culture. In the study *Η Ελληνική Παράδοση στο Νίκο Καζαντζάκη* Nikos Matsoukas argued that the content and style of Kazantzakis’ work reflect the cultural tradition of Greece.<sup>31</sup> Matsoukas associated the recurring motif of the light in Kazantzakis’ tragedies (*Προμηθέας, Χριστός, Βούδας*), in *Ασκητική* and in the image of the sun in the opening and ending of Kazantzakis’ *Οδύσσεια* with the presence of the light in the Greek cultural tradition. Moreover, Matsoukas viewed the role of freedom in Kazantzakis’ work in the context of the Christian tradition. Kazantzakis’ work has also been read in relation to the notion of Greekness. Mario Vitti in the study *Η γενιά του Τριάντα: Ιδεολογία και Μορφή* claimed that Kazantzakis’ version of

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<sup>28</sup> L. Politis 1973: 220-229.

<sup>29</sup> L. Politis 1973: 220-221. The book was first written in English for a non-Greek readership. The same point is made in the Greek edition of the book. L. Politis 1979: 269.

<sup>30</sup> Dimiroulis 2010: 77-105.

<sup>31</sup> Matsoukas 1989.

Greekness had a Cretan character in comparison to the Generation of the Thirties.<sup>32</sup> Alexandra Thalassis in the unpublished PhD thesis *Incarnations of Greekness in the Greek novel of World War II* viewed Kazantzakis' novel *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* as a response to the criticism's demand for a Greek novel that transcends nevertheless stereotypes. According to Thalassis, the essence of Zorbas is that he represents an entire way of life and values that encapsulate the continuity of Hellenism rendering the novel comparable to Myrivilis' *Ο Βασίλης ο Αρβανίτης* and Venezis' *Αιολική Γη*.

Vrasidas Karalis in *Ο Νίκος Καζαντζάκης και το Παλίμψηστο της Ιστορίας* suggested that Kazantzakis' perception of Hellenism is a counterproposal to the Generation of the Thirties.<sup>33</sup> In his examination of Kazantzakis' travel book on Morea Karalis noted that Kazantzakis regarded Gemistos Plethon, Theodoros Kolokotronis and Photis Kondoglou as the representatives of Neohellenism on the grounds that they dreamed of a renaissance in an era of decline. According to Karalis this suggestion of Kazantzakis is his alternative towards the triangle Erotokritos, Makrygiannis, Theophilos that was proposed by the Generation of the Thirties.<sup>34</sup> Stamatis Philippides in the chapter "Λαϊκότροπα στοιχεία στα μυθιστορήματα του Καζαντζάκη" detected folk elements in the novels of Kazantzakis and argued that Kazantzakis' distinguishing characteristic is the combination of lofty with folk themes. Philippides also observed that through the juxtaposition of lofty themes with folk stories Kazantzakis transforms the historical past in the way that the Magic Realism of Gabriel García Marquez did.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Vitti 1984: 205.

<sup>33</sup> Karalis 1994.

<sup>34</sup> Karalis 1994: 131-150.

<sup>35</sup> Philippides 1997: 209-230.



The connection of Kazantzakis' work with ancient Greek, Byzantine, and English literature as well as modern philosophy has been sufficiently studied and analysed. Manolis Chalvatzakis in the study *Καζαντζάκης-Ντοστογιέφσκι* read Kazantzakis' work in relation to Russian literature and more specifically to Fyodor Dostoevsky.<sup>36</sup> In 2009 Andonis Glytzouris analysed Kazantzakis' early theatrical plays in the context of the European movements of the avant-garde.<sup>37</sup>

In the existing bibliography there are studies that investigate the connection of Kazantzakis' work with the philosophical theory of the French philosopher Henri Bergson and the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche.<sup>38</sup> In the chapters "Alexis Zorbas: a philosophical interpretation" and "Alexis Zorbas: a political interpretation" in the study *Politics of the Spirit* Peter Bien examined Kazantzakis' novel from a philosophical and political perspective.<sup>39</sup> According to Bien, the novel is a parable of the fusion of the clashing Eastern and Western forces that Nietzsche and Kazantzakis perceived as Greek. In the political interpretation Bien employed the term "mellowed nationalism" and pointed out that Zorbas introduces a new patriotism leading the narrator to a modern Greekness that embraces the values that had made the Greek nation to endure the hardships of war. In the chapter "*O Kapetan Michalis*: an epic manqué" Bien argued that the connection of the novel with Homer's *Iliad* created a generic confusion to the novel on the grounds that the epic element has been juxtaposed to conventions deriving from different genres such as realism and psychological narrations.<sup>40</sup> Bien viewed a discrepancy in the patriotic orientation and

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<sup>36</sup> Chalvatzakis 1957. See also Pouliopoulos 1972.

<sup>37</sup> Glytzouris 2009.

<sup>38</sup> See P. Bien 1989: 23-53.

<sup>39</sup> Bien 2007: 144-164. For an analysis of the connection of Kazantzakis' work with the philosophical theory of Nietzsche also see Bien 1989, Konidari-Phavi 2008 and Mc Donough 1978.

<sup>40</sup> Bien 2007: 372-393.

the personal aspirations of the main hero and noted that it stems from the fact that Kazantzakis was not an adherent of patriotism in 1949-1950 when he was writing the novel.

The connection of Kazantzakis' work with ancient Greek literature and culture was analysed by Giorgos Stamatiou in the study *Ο Καζαντζάκης και οι Αρχαίοι*.<sup>41</sup> The parallels of Kazantzakis' novel, *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης*, with Homer's *Iliad* were examined by Elizabeth Constantinides in the article "Kazantzakis and the Cretan hero".<sup>42</sup> In the paper "The Relation of Kazantzakis's *Kapetan Michalis* to Homer's *Iliad* and Shakespeare's *Othello*" Michael Paschalis investigated the connection of Kapetan Michalis, Emine, and Nouri Bay with the Homeric Achilles, Briseis, Helen and Hector and also the linking of Emine's murder by kapetan Michalis with Shakespeare's *Othello*.<sup>43</sup> In the paper "Η κυοφορία του Ζορμπά και οι τέσσερεις μαίες του: Όμηρος, Πλάτωνας, Δάντης, Σαίξπηρ" Paschalis traced the sources of the novel *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* in autobiographical comments of Kazantzakis and examined the connection of the novel with texts of ancient Greek, Italian and English literature: Homer's *Odyssey*, Plato's *Republic*, Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.<sup>44</sup>

The connection of Kazantzakis' work with Byzantine literature and culture was explored by Theocharis Detorakis in the paper "Ο Καζαντζάκης και το Βυζάντιο".<sup>45</sup> Kazantzakis had studied Byzantine lives of saints as he noted in *Αναφορά στον Γκρέκο* and *Συμπόσιο*. Detorakis pointed out that Kazantzakis had a

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<sup>41</sup> Stamatiou 1983.

<sup>42</sup> Constantinides 1984: 31-41. Republished in Greek as "Ο Καζαντζάκης και ο Κρητικός ήρωας" in Beaton (ed.) 2011: 409-422.

<sup>43</sup> Paschalis 2010: 143-172.

<sup>44</sup> Paschalis 2007: 1114-1191. For the connection of Kazantzakis' *Οδύσσεια* with Plato see Andriopoulos 1995: 111-120.

<sup>45</sup> Detorakis 1987: 180-198.

strong interest in the ascetic life and had read Byzantine hymns as well as selected studies on hymnography. According to Detorakis, characteristic examples of the Byzantine literature and culture on Kazantzakis' work are the allusions to hymns, his own composition of a hymn, and his unfulfilled plan to compose an epic on Akritas. Detorakis in the paper "Το δημοτικό τραγούδι στην *Οδύσσεια* του Καζαντζάκη" examined the presence of folk poetry on Kazantzakis' epic *Οδύσσεια*.<sup>46</sup> He detected quotations of lines, and also parallel elements of technique such as repetitions of words and motifs that are characteristically found in folk songs.

In the paper "Minoans in Modern Greek literature" Roderick Beaton investigated the literary appropriation of the Minoan past in the work of Kazantzakis, Ritsos, Elytis, Diktaios, Kalokyris and Galanaki all of whom except Ritsos were born on Crete and spent their adult life away from Crete.<sup>47</sup> Beaton argued that Greek authors of the 20th century did not acknowledge in their work archaeological evidence showing the differences between the Minoan and later Greek civilisation but aimed to expand the definition of Hellenism by including the Minoan culture as a part of Greek tradition. Therefore, the literary treatment of the Minoans contributed to a redefinition of Hellenic identity rather than an expression of local Cretan identity. In the book *Ο Καζαντζάκης Μοντερνιστής και Μεταμοντέρνος* Beaton read Kazantzakis' literary work in the light of modernism and postmodernism. He argued that *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* is based on the modernist "mythical method" of James Joyce that can also be detected in Seferis, Theotokas and Stratis Tsirkas and he examined the novel *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* beyond the message of national ideology and the conventions of realism anticipating postmodernism. According to Beaton, this alternative reality that anticipates postmodernism is the key in the interpretation of *Ο*

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<sup>46</sup> Detorakis 1979: 309-336.

<sup>47</sup> Beaton 2006: 183-195.

*Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* and in the last chapter of the book he presented an analysis of Kazantzakis' poetics noting parallels with the poetics of Palamas and representatives of Greek modernism. Beaton noted that the novel *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* bears common characteristics with the Greek literature of the Metaxas and Occupation years that renewed ethnography and was in search of Greekness. In *Introduction to Modern Greek Literature* Beaton presented features of Kazantzakis' work in the context of Modern Greek literature.<sup>48</sup> He pointed out that Kazantzakis also shares common elements with the poetry and ideology of Sikelianos regarding spirituality, asceticism and deliverance and argued that in Kazantzakis' magnum opus *Οδύσσεια*, the epic synthesis of the legacy of Palamas reached its peak.

Panos Karavias observed affinities in the thought of Kazantzakis and Dragoumis' literary works *Σαμοθράκη, Σταμάτημα, Όσοι ζωντανοί, Μαρτύρων και Ηρώων Αίμα*.<sup>49</sup> According to Karavias, the theories of Nietzsche, Barrès, Bergson and Buddha were assimilated by Dragoumis and Kazantzakis who reworked them and incorporated them into the expression of their own ideological orientation. Giorgos Kechagioglou in "Μερικές παρατηρήσεις και σκέψεις με αφορμή τη μεσοασιατική και απωανατολική γραμματειακή διάσταση στον Νίκο Καζαντζάκη" examined Kazantzakis' appropriation of the philosophy, literature and work of the Eastern culture in parallel with other Modern Greek writers.<sup>50</sup> He noted that Palamas of the late 1880s was influenced by the literature of India in the short story "Τα μάτια του Κουνάλα", in *Ασάλευτη Ζωή*, the sonnet "τα λόγια του Κρισνά", *Δωδεκάλογος του Γύφτου*, *Η Φλογέρα του Βασιλιά* and in *Βωμοί*.

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<sup>48</sup> Beaton 1999: 118-123, 175-178.

<sup>49</sup> Karavias 1979: 143-152.

<sup>50</sup> Kechagioglou 2011: 159-179.

There are studies in which the convergence of Kazantzakis' work with Greek ethnography has been noted. In the paper "Το κωμικό στοιχείο στον «Καπετάν Μιχάλη»" Giorgis Manousakis examined a number of characters portrayed as caricatures in humorous narratives of their lives in Megalo Kastro.<sup>51</sup> According to Manousakis, Kazantzakis apart from presenting the heroic aspect of characters does not hesitate to parody them. Manousakis observed an irony towards the characters and at the same time the depiction of their human aspects that is comparable to Ioannis Kondylakis' *Ο Πατούχας*. Michalis Meraklis in the article "Ξαναδιαβάζοντας τον Ζορμπά: η φιλοσοφική ηθογραφία του Νίκου Καζαντζάκη" pointed out that *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* is an ethnography set on the island of Crete depicting its landscape, seascape, language and customs.<sup>52</sup> Meraklis argued that Kazantzakis' philosophy is characterised by a simplicity that is in accordance with that of ethnography. Henri Tonnet in the chapter "Τα μυθιστορήματα του Καζαντζάκη (1946-1954): μια ύστατη έκφραση της ηθογραφίας" in the study *Ιστορία του Ελληνικού Μυθιστορήματος* argued that Kazantzakis' novels are connected with ethnography.<sup>53</sup> Tonnet claimed that Kazantzakis' work is comparable to that of Drosinis, Karkavitsas and Kondylakis.

There are articles tracing the relationship of Kazantzakis with fellow writers from his circle such as Galateia Kazantzaki, who was his first wife, Pandelis Prevelakis and Angelos Sikelianos. Varvara Georgopoulou in the essay "Γαλάτεια Αλεξίου-Νίκος Καζαντζάκης: ένας διάλογος έρωτα και δημιουργίας" explored the connection of Galateia and Nikos Kazantzakis.<sup>54</sup> Georgopoulou noted that in 1909 Kazantzakis dedicated *Όφις και Κρίνο* to Galateia and published a criticism of her

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<sup>51</sup> Manousakis 1978: 106-117.

<sup>52</sup> Meraklis 1977a: 61-66.

<sup>53</sup> Tonnet 1999: 274-281.

<sup>54</sup> Georgopoulou 2010: 98-106.

own novella *Ridi Pagliaccio* in *O Nouμός*. The same scholar argued that the character Lalo in Kazantzakis' play *Ξημερώνει* refers to Galatea because Lalo was the pseudonym of Galatea (Lalo de Castro). Georgopoulou observed affinities between Kazantzakis' play *O Oθέλλος Ξαναγυρίζει* and Galatea's play *Συμπληγάδες* and read the novel *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* as an attempt of Kazantzakis to approach the earthly world of Galatea although his view was that of the intellectual, something that Galatea criticised in *Άνθρωποι και Υπεράνθρωποι* in 1957.

Pandelis Prevelakis in the chapter "Το Χρονικό μιας φιλίας" in the book *Άγγελος Σικελιανός* offered a chronicle of Kazantzakis' relation with Sikelianos.<sup>55</sup> He highlighted the importance of their visit to Mount Athos for their spiritual development but also their consequent detachment. Prevelakis observed that Kazantzakis used to praise the poetic talent of Sikelianos characterising him a great, worldwide poet. Prevelakis also noted that Kazantzakis dedicated to Sikelianos a canto entitled "Η τερτσίνα" as well as his translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Sikelianos dedicated to Kazantzakis the play *O Δαίδαλος στην Κρήτη*.

The affinities between the work of Prevelakis and Kazantzakis have been examined by critics. Andonis Decavalles in "Καζαντζάκης και Πρεβελάκης: δυο Κρητικές φωνές" viewed the Cretan origins as a common point of reference for the two writers but also detected divergences in their thought and work.<sup>56</sup> He remarked that Kazantzakis wrote his novels after his epic, *Οδύσσεια*, whereas in Prevelakis' case his epic *O Νέος Ερωτόκριτος* was written after his novels. Decavalles noted that the struggle for the liberation of Crete of Kazantzakis' *O Καπετάν Μιχάλης* comes after the writing of Prevelakis' *Παντέρμη Κρήτη* and *O Κρητικός*. Giorgis Manousakis

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<sup>55</sup> Prevelakis 1984b: 141-210.

<sup>56</sup> Decavalles 1985: 103-143.

in the paper “Η Μαντάμ Ορτάνς και τα τέσσερα λογοτεχνικά πορträίτα της” observed that the first literary appearance of Madame Hortense is in Prevelakis’ novella *To Χρονικό μιας Πολιτείας* in 1938, the year of her death.<sup>57</sup> According to Manousakis, in Prevelakis’ story Madame Hortense and the admirals reflect the moral corrosion of the Western world in contrast with the morality of the local society and in the end Madame Hortense conforms to the morals of the village. Manousakis argued that in Kazantzakis’ novel *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* Hortense has a smoother transition from her life with the admirals to a regular life than in Prevelakis’ text and that her death, after the death of the widow, is the tragic end of the comic melodrama in the last phase of her life. Aris Diktaios’ poem does not express moral decline and Hortense is depicted as the paradigm of pleasure according to Manousakis. The same scholar argued that in Galateia Kazantzaki’s short story the narration does not focus on the past of Madame Hortense but to her present and she becomes a guerilla denouncing her past in France of the belle époque. Athina Vouyouca in “Nikos Kazantzaki et Pandelis Prevelakis: des chemins croisés” traced similarities between Prevelakis and Kazantzakis in their interest in the demotic language as well as the depiction of Crete’s people and customs which is manifest in Prevelakis’ *To Χρονικό μιας Πολιτείας*, *Ο Κρητικός*, and in Kazantzakis’ *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης*.<sup>58</sup> Vouyouca also noted the different views of the two authors on a philosophical and political level and argued that for Prevelakis Crete is a symbol of national freedom whereas for Kazantzakis it represents freedom of a worldwide character. Michael Paschalis in “Μύθος και ιστορία στον Πρεβελάκη ή ο ιστός της αράχνης” noted that Prevelakis was considering himself the first national writer of

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<sup>57</sup> Manousakis 1991: 79-100.

<sup>58</sup> Vouyouca 2005: 42-55.

fiction of Greece with the only exception perhaps of Makrygiannis.<sup>59</sup> Paschalis argued that Prevelakis was acknowledging Kazantzakis as a mentor but he did not encourage comparisons between their works and noted that Prevelakis would stress that Kazantzakis followed Prevelakis' depiction of Crete since he developed it in his own work after Prevelakis. Chrysa Damianaki in “Η διαφορετική «ανάβαση της ψυχής» των δυο Κρητικών συγγραφέων Νίκου Καζαντζάκη και Παντελή Πρεβελάκη” observed that Prevelakis was for many years a strong supporter in Kazantzakis' search for demotic words sending him rare words that he would then incorporate into his work.<sup>60</sup> Damianaki argued that Kazantzakis' metaphysical struggle made Prevelakis to distance himself from Kazantzakis in the late 1950s, an attitude that changed after Kazantzakis' death. Finally, she referred to the interest of both writers in Crete and its presence in their literary work.

In the essay “Ο Χριστός ξανασταυρώνεται στα χρόνια του Εμφυλίου” Angela Kastrinaki examined the theme of the crucifixion in the civil war years and read Kazantzakis' *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* in association with Sikelianos' play *Ο Χριστός στη Ρώμη* (1946).<sup>61</sup> Kastrinaki pointed out that both authors use the metaphor of crucifixion in a distant or close past which becomes reality and another person takes the role of Christ. According to Kastrinaki, there are also divergences in the two works on the grounds that Kazantzakis depicts a civil riot between Greeks whereas Sikelianos shows the struggle of the Greeks and Hebrews against Rome.<sup>62</sup> Kastrinaki also noted that in 1948 Sikelianos returned to this theme with a Digenis-Christ, a warrior reflecting the civil conflict in *Ο Θάνατος του Διγενή*, and Kazantzakis in the novel *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός*.

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<sup>59</sup> Paschalis 2009: 1002-1003.

<sup>60</sup> Damianaki 2010: 81-97.

<sup>61</sup> Kastrinaki 2002: 348-366.

<sup>62</sup> Kastrinaki 2002: 359.



The relationship of Kazantzakis and Theotokas was investigated by Renée Richer in the article “Deux hommes de theatre: Kazantzaki et Theotokas” starting from Theotokas’ criticism of Kazantzakis’ *Οδύσσεια*.<sup>63</sup> Richer noted that it was the reading of Theotokas’ play *Αντάρα στ’ Ανάπλι* that inspired Kazantzakis to write the play *Καποδίστριας*. Although appropriating the same theme, its depiction has differences according to Richer since Theotokas wanted to represent the idea of a synthesis of Hellenism whereas Kazantzakis’ play does not revolve around an idea but a main character and his exceptional destiny. Dimitris Tziovas in the essay “Ρεαλισμός και παραπλανητική τέχνη: *Ο Χριστός ξανασταυρώνεται*, ο Θεοτοκάς και η αριστερά” pointed out that the critics of the left wing detected a turn to realism in Kazantzakis’ novel that could not be found in his previous works.<sup>64</sup> *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* is a culmination of social realism and this was stressed in the theatrical and cinema adaptations of the novel. Tziovas noted that the long relationship of Theotokas and Kazantzakis ended when Kazantzakis thought that Theotokas did not support the staging of his play *Καποδίστριας*. In *Ο Μύθος της Γενιάς του Τριάντα. Νεότερικότητα, Ελληνικότητα και Πολιτισμική Ιδεολογία* Tziovas observed the general silence of the Generation of the Thirties towards the work of Kazantzakis and remarked that Kazantzakis’ version of Greekness is a fusion of the local and the cosmopolitan element as well as the traditional and the modern. However, the Generation of the Thirties was distant from his work and his version of Greekness, something that according to Tziovas indicated the limits of the Generation of the Thirties.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Richer 1993: 25-35.

<sup>64</sup> Tziovas 2006: 73-89.

<sup>65</sup> Tziovas 2011: 45.

Pavlos Tzermias in the study *Ο Πολιτικός Νίκος Καζαντζάκης* argued that Kazantzakis' view of Cavafy as a poet of decadence in 1927 converges with the opinion of the left wing about Cavafy and offered the opinion of Vasilis Rotas as an example.<sup>66</sup> Tzermias noted that Kazantzakis combines praises and reproaches that echo the criticism of the Marxists regarding Cavafy such as Michalis Papaioannou or Stratis Tsirkas and observed that Cavafy and Kazantzakis converge in "Ιθάκη" and in *Οδύσσεια* because in both works the ultimate goal is the journey itself. He suggested that Cavafy's view of Hellenism is characterised by nationalism with ecumenical elements whereas Kazantzakis advocates nationalism with aristocratic elements converging with the views of Dragoumis.

Georgia Kakourou-Chroni in the study *Νίκος Καζαντζάκης Νικηφόρος Βρεττάκος. Δυο Δημιουργοί Συνομιλούν Μέσα από το Έργο τους* noted that although Kazantzakis and Vrettakos had never met their works show affinities culminating in Vrettakos' study of the work of Kazantzakis entitled *Νίκος Καζαντζάκης η Αγωνία του και το Έργο του*.<sup>67</sup> Kakourou viewed Kazantzakis' *Ασκητική* and Vrettakos' *Δυο Άνθρωποι Μιλούν για την Ειρήνη του Κόσμου* as manifestos. She detected convergences in Kazantzakis' *Οδύσσεια* and Vrettakos' *Το Ταξίδι του Αρχάγγελου* with regard to the theme of the journey as well as divergences in style. The same scholar presented a comparative reading of the role of Prometheus and Mt. Taygetos in the work of the two authors. According to Kakourou, Vrettakos proved an apt critic of Kazantzakis' work and although *Οι Αδερφοφάδες* and *Αναφορά στον Γκρέκο* were published after Vrettakos' study, they affirm Vrettakos' view that Kazantzakis adopted a more humane and earthy worldview at the end of his life.

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<sup>66</sup> Tzermias 2010: 325-332, 352-360.

<sup>67</sup> Kakourou-Chroni 1994.

Common characteristics in the life and work of Kazantzakis and Elytis and in particular on the influence of Kazantzakis on Elytis were examined by Christos Saltapidas in the article “Nikos Kazantzaki et Odysseus Elytis”.<sup>68</sup> Saltapidas argued that French letters and thought were crucial for both Kazantzakis and Elytis (especially Henri Bergson and Paul Eluard). In 1975 Elytis declared that as *Ασκητική* was a point of reference in the entire work of Kazantzakis, *Μικρός Ναυτίλος* has the same importance among his intellectual production. Saltapidas added that the difference is that Kazantzakis wrote *Ασκητική* before producing his mature work whereas *Μικρός Ναυτίλος* was written by Elytis after his mature poetic production. In the paper “Ν. Καζαντζάκης-Ο. Ελύτης: εκλεκτικές συγγένειες” Giorgis Giatromanolakis observed that in his Nobel Prize speech Elytis mentioned Kazantzakis as one of the greatest Modern Greek poets whereas Seferis in his Nobel Prize speech did not refer to Modern Greek authors.<sup>69</sup> Giatromanolakis also cited the criticism of Nikolareizis and Savvidis that had spotted similarities between Kazantzakis’ *Οδύσσεια* and Elytis’ *Άξιον Εστί* and *Άσμα Ηρωικό και Πένθιμο για τον Χαμένο Ανθρωπολοχό της Αλβανίας*. Giatromanolakis attributed their parallels to their common exposure to Cretan culture as both Kazantzakis and Elytis were born in Heraklion (as Elytis mentions the places “εφτά μπαλτάδες”, “Μέγας Κούλες” and “μπεντένια” of Heraklion in Genesis of *Άξιον Εστί*). Giatromanolakis noted the coinage of words by both authors that is often described as taking place within dreams and also remarked Elytis’ words that *Μικρός Ναυτίλος* has the pivotal place in his work as that of *Ασκητική* in Kazantzakis’ work.

In the existing secondary bibliography about the work of Kazantzakis, however, there are no studies treating as a whole the phenomenon of the intertextual

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<sup>68</sup> Saltapidas 1993: 36-45.

<sup>69</sup> Giatromanolakis 2011: 11-14.

relationship of his fiction with the Modern Greek literary tradition. This thesis aims to present a comprehensive approach to the engagement of Kazantzakis with Modern Greek literature and analyse the relation of his major novels to it. The thesis has the following structure which is organised into five chapters. The first chapter explores the activity of Kazantzakis as a reader of Modern Greek literature. First, an overview of his reading interests in successive periods of his life is presented. Then, the critical views that Kazantzakis expressed about authors and works of Modern Greek literature are being examined. Sources that have been used for this chapter are his essays, letters, interviews and books of his library. The second chapter moves from the exploration of the works that Kazantzakis read and commented on as a reader to the analysis of the first major novel that he wrote in the early 1940s, *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά*. It explores its connection with works from the folk and literary tradition and examines the function of their integration in the novel. The third chapter argues that the Modern Greek works with which *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* is connected underscore the concept of recurrence that is developed as a theme in the novel. The fourth chapter analyses the quotations and narrative allusions in *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* and examines through close readings the affinities in the depiction of the characters Thrasaki, Polyxenis and Kapetan Michalis with previous works of Modern Greek literature. The fifth chapter focuses on *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός*. It is argued that the themes that are being developed had been treated before in earlier works of Modern Greek literature but the novel also introduces innovations.

This thesis presents for the first time a comprehensive analysis of the prerequisite acquaintance of Kazantzakis with Modern Greek literature and the methods through which the novels that the author produced are related to it. Therefore, it aims to show how works of the Modern Greek literary tradition have

been rewritten in the new context of Kazantzakis' major novels and also that his novels acquire new perspectives for interpretation through the detection of their intertextual connection with the tradition in which they belong.

## 1. Kazantzakis as a reader of Modern Greek Literature

The objectives of this chapter are first, to present an overview of Kazantzakis' acquaintance with Modern Greek literature as a reader and second, to examine his critical evaluations of texts from the epic of *Διγενής Ακρίτης* up to the Greek literature of his own lifetime. Sources from which information about his reading interests and evaluations are gleaned are: books that are included in his library as well as Kazantzakis' letters, essays, and interviews in which he commented upon Modern Greek literature. The aim of the overview is to demonstrate that Kazantzakis had a profound engagement with the Modern Greek literary tradition as a reader and that he had accumulated a wide knowledge about it when he produced the major novels of his maturity in the decades of 1940 and 1950.

### 1.1. KAZANTZAKIS' ENGAGEMENT WITH MODERN GREEK LITERATURE

Kazantzakis was an avid reader of literature. Traces of his eagerness for reading Modern Greek literature can be detected since his early years. A vivid image of his reading interests when he was a student of Law at the University of Athens was drawn by Kazantzakis in a letter to Andonis Anemogiannis on 19 December 1902. Kazantzakis said:

Και προσπαθώ να διώξω τους ποιητές από το γραφείο μου, την ποίησι από την καρδιά μου, ο Παράσχος να υποχωρήσει στον Δημαρά, ο Ουγκώ στον Savigny, ο Λαμαρτίνος στον Jhering, η ποίησις στην πραγματικότητα και όμως! Μπροστά μου

στην ώρα που Σου γράφω είναι ανοιχτός ο Δάντης και ο Manzoni, ενώ το γραφείο μου στολίζεται από τον Ουγκώ και τον Σολωμό...<sup>70</sup>

From this excerpt we obtain the information that in the early 1900s Kazantzakis' attention as a reader was drawn to the literary work of Dante Alighieri, Alessandro Manzoni, Victor Hugo and Dionysios Solomos. Moreover, he was interested in the poetry of Achilleas Paraschos, whose work was connected with the movement of romanticism. At that time Kazantzakis viewed favourably the poets and authors of romanticism, although he will later distance himself from the movement.<sup>71</sup>

In 1906 while Kazantzakis was still a student he wrote and published *Οφεις και Κρίνο* and in 1907 the play *Ξημερώνει*. After completing his graduate studies in Paris, he published in the journals *Νέα Ζωή* and *Ο Νουμάς* a series of critical reviews regarding recently published Greek books.<sup>72</sup> These reviews were published in 1909 and 1910 and were signed by Kazantzakis with the pen names Πέτρος Ψηλορείτης and Κάρμα Νιρβαμή.<sup>73</sup> Literary works that were examined in Kazantzakis' critical reviews were novellas, poems and plays by Galateia Kazantzaki, Pavlos Nirvanas, Sotiris Skipis, Spyros Melas, Ion Dragoumis, Kostas Paroritis, and Jean Moréas.<sup>74</sup> The series of Kazantzakis' reviews contained a presentation of the plot of the

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<sup>70</sup> Kazantzakis 1979: 34.

<sup>71</sup> For the connection of Kazantzakis' early plays with romanticism see Glytzouris 2009: 3-33.

<sup>72</sup> Kazantzakis, "Γαλάτεια Αλεξίου (Αφορμή από το «Ridi Pagliacio» της)", *Ο Νουμάς*, 1909, 348, 1-3. Kazantzakis, "Κριτικά Μελετήματα. Παύλου Νιρβάνα: Μαρία Πενταγιώτισσα. Παντελή Χορν: Μελάχρα", *Νέα Ζωή*, 1909, 6, 51-58. Kazantzakis, "Κριτικά Μελετήματα. Σ. Σκίπη: ο Απέθαντος", *Νέα Ζωή*, 1909, 6, 121-128. Kazantzakis, "Κριτικά μελετήματα. Σπ. Μελά: το χαλασμένο σπίτι", *Νέα Ζωή*, 1910, 6, 164-168. Kazantzakis, "Κριτικά μελετήματα. Για τους νέους μας. (Αφορμή από τη «Σαμοθράκη» του Ίδα)", *Νέα Ζωή*, 1910, 6, 232-239. Kazantzakis, "Κώστα Παρορίτη: «Στο Άλμπουρο»", *Ο Νουμάς*, 1910, 391, 7. Kazantzakis, "Jean Moréas", *Νέα Ζωή*, 1910, 6, 353-360.

<sup>73</sup> For a presentation of Kazantzakis' critical reviews that appeared in the journal *Νέα Ζωή* of Alexandria, see Gialourakis 1978.

<sup>74</sup> Kazantzakis' library includes books by writers who had attracted his attention during these years such as Ion Dragoumis' *Σαμοθράκη* and the collection *Έργα. Σειρά Α' Λογοτεχνικά*, Palamas' *Ο Τάφος* and *Ο Θάνατος του Παλληκαριού* as well as Skipis' *Ο Γύρος των Ωρών*. See Detorakis and Katsalaki 1997: 48, 69 and 80 respectively.

examined work, an analysis of its ideological perceptions and a critical evaluation of its merits and flaws. There were also expressions of his aesthetic perceptions on art and literature and comparative readings of the works with Greek folk poetry, the poetry of Kostis Palamas and Solomos as well as fiction by Andreas Karkavitsas. Kazantzakis seemed to be writing these book reviews as a man of letters who had also published literary works. At the beginning of the twentieth century it was not uncommon for writers to operate as critics like Palamas and Grigorios Xenopoulos.<sup>75</sup>

Later, in the decade of the 1920s Kazantzakis travelled to France, Austria, Germany, Italy and the Soviet Union. During his journeys abroad he was seeking to gain access to books that were being published in Greece. For instance, on 1 September 1922 during his travel in Russia he wrote to Galateia Kazantzaki: “Αν κανένα ελληνικό βιβλίο βγήκε, στείλε μου χωρίς άλλο”.<sup>76</sup> A similar comment was expressed by Kazantzakis in the following year (March-April 1923) when said to her: “στέλνε μου ό,τι ελληνικό βιβλίο”.<sup>77</sup> Such passages of the early 1920s demonstrate Kazantzakis’ interest in being acquainted with the contemporary literary production of Greece.

Furthermore, during his sojourns outside Greece in the decade of the 1920s Kazantzakis would request to acquire specific Modern Greek literary books that he considered to be relevant to the work that he was writing. In 1929, when he was drafting the novel *Kapétan Élia* which was settled in Crete,<sup>78</sup> he asked several correspondents of his to send him related literary books and studies. On 6 July 1929

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<sup>75</sup> The following comment of Palamas in 1904 draws a vivid image of the critical landscape of the time: “Κι ακόμη και τους πιο καλούς μας κριτικούς ανάμεσα στους πιο καλούς μας λογοτέχνες πρέπει να τους ζητήσουμε. Μα και της κριτικής η δουλειά δεν ξεχωρίστηκε ακόμα καθώς πρέπει”. Palamas n.d.: 22, volume 6. See Kokolis 1981: 79-144.

<sup>76</sup> Kazantzakis 1958a: 76.

<sup>77</sup> Kazantzakis 1958a: 177.

<sup>78</sup> On this novel see Prevelakis 1984a: 142, 146, 722.



he wrote to Prevelakis from Gottesgab: “Έγραψα της αδερφής μου να μου στείλει τον *Κρητικό Γάμο* του [Παύλου] Βλαστού και τα Κρητ[ικά] δημοτ[ικά] τραγ[ούδια]. Επίσης το βιβλίο της Γαλάτ[ειας]. Σας παρακαλώ στείλετέ μου αν έχετε τίποτα βοήθημα για την Κρήτη: έθιμα, επεισόδια, ιστορίες τραγικές...”.<sup>79</sup> A few days later, on 12 July 1929 he also asked Charilaos Stephanidis to send him Georgios Marandis’ ethnographic novella *Το Μιχελιό*, Galateia Kazantzaki’s and Ioannis Kondylakis’ stories and explained to him: “my book will be a novel, and I’m interested in whatever relates to the Cretan soul”.<sup>80</sup> Although the draft of the novel *Kapétan Élia* was eventually torn up by Kazantzakis, material from these sources was incorporated into the novels that he wrote later in the 1940s and 1950s.

His interest in Cretan literature is also reflected in the collection of books that are found in Kazantzakis’ library. His library contains a copy of the Cretan comedy *Φορτουνάτος* by Markos Andonios Phoskolos which was edited by Stephanos Xanthoudidis in 1922,<sup>81</sup> and a copy of the anthology of works of the Cretan Renaissance from the 15<sup>th</sup> until the 17<sup>th</sup> century that was edited by Stylianos Alexiou including notes and underlining.<sup>82</sup> Kazantzakis’ library also comprises offprint articles by Manousos Manousakas which were published in the journal *Κρητικά Χρονικά* in 1947 (*Ανέκδοτα Ιντερμέδια του «Κρητικού Θεάτρου»* and *Ζητήματα του Κρητικού Θεάτρου*).<sup>83</sup> Moreover, in the library of the author we find a copy of Xanthoudidis’ study *Η Ενετοκρατία εν Κρήτη και οι κατά των Ενετών Αγώνες των Κρητών* which

<sup>79</sup> Prevelakis 1984a: 142.

<sup>80</sup> Kazantzakis’ letter to Stephanidis in Bien 2012: 353.

<sup>81</sup> Markos Andonios Phoskolos, *Φορτουνάτος*, (ed.) S. Xanthoudidis, Athens: Eleutheroudakis, 1922. Kazantzakis also held a copy of *Μνημόσυνα Στεφ. Ξανθουδίδου-Ιωσήφ Χατζηδάκη 1938-1940*. Detorakis and Katsalaki 1997: 64.

<sup>82</sup> Stylianos Alexiou (ed.) *Κρητική Ανθολογία (ΙΕ-ΙΖ αιώνας)*, Heraklion: EKIM, 1954. Detorakis and Katsalaki 1997: 56.

<sup>83</sup> Detorakis and Katsalaki 1997: 61.

presented the history, culture and literature in the period of the Venetian occupation of Crete.<sup>84</sup>

In 1928 when he was in Moscow he attempted to write a study with Panaït Istrati on contemporary Greece. For this purpose he asked Prevelakis to send him Aristos Kabanis' *Ιστορία της Νέας Ελληνικής Λογοτεχνίας (1000 μ.Χ.-1900)* which had been printed in Cairo three years earlier (1925) and was written from the perspective of demoticism.<sup>85</sup> In the next year (16 March 1929), Kazantzakis published in the French journal *Monde* an overview of Modern Greek literature entitled "La littérature grecque contemporaine".<sup>86</sup> This essay commenced with a presentation of the Greek language question developing the arguments of the demoticists on the one hand and those of the purists on the other hand. The major representatives of the contemporary literature of Greece were also presented with references to the poetry of Solomos, Aristotelis Valaoritis, Palamas, Angelos Sikelianos and Kostas Varnalis as well as the fiction of Galateia Kazantzaki and Konstandinos Theotokis.

Traces of a Greek anthology of writers are also found in Kazantzakis' notebooks which can be viewed as a manifestation of his choices among Modern Greek literature. In a notebook entitled *Exercise Book No 2, Seeds* Kazantzakis had written the following names of poets: "Άγρας, Αλεξίου Λ., Αυγέρης, Βαλαωρίτης, Βάρναλης, Βιζυηνός, Βλαστός, Γρυπάρης, Εφταλιώτης, Καβάφης, Κάλβος, Καρυωτάκης, Μαβίλης, Μαλακάσης, Μελαχρινός, Παλαμάς, Παπαντωνίου, Πολυλάς, Πορφύρας, Πρεβελάκης, Ρίτσος, Σεφέρης, Σικελιανός, Σκίπης,

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<sup>84</sup> Detorakis and Katsalaki 1997: 67.

<sup>85</sup> Prevelakis 1984a: 92-93. For an examination of the relevance of Kabanis' book with the demoticism and its indebtedness to Palamas' critical studies, see Apostolidou "Δημοτικισμός και ιστορία της λογοτεχνίας: Αρίστος Καμπάνης" in Apostolidou 1992: 360-364.

<sup>86</sup> Kazantzakis 1929: 5.

Σολωμός”.<sup>87</sup> This compilation of names of the established writers of the time reflects Kazantzakis’ selections of the representatives from Modern Greek literature that he regarded as most interesting.

In the decade of the 1920s Kazantzakis was reading Modern Greek literature and he was also writing essays about it along with the production of his own literary work. This activity, however, temporarily subsided in the decade of the 1930s when he was mainly occupied with the writing of *Οδύσσεια*, the epic consisting of 33.333 verses that he wrote in eight drafts from 1924 until its publication in 1938. During the period that preceded the printing of *Οδύσσεια* Kazantzakis did not seem to be reading extensively. He attested to this tendency in an interview with Loukas Darakis which was published in March 1935.<sup>88</sup> When Darakis asked: “Πώς βλέπετε τη φιλολογική μας παραγωγή στα τελευταία χρόνια;”, Kazantzakis replied that he was not reading literature at that time: ‘Δεν την παρακολουθώ. Τα βιβλία δεν μου είνε πια γόνιμα. Πέρασε η εποχή που ζητούσα απ’ αυτά γνώσι και βοήθεια’.<sup>89</sup> Kazantzakis recognised that he was previously viewing books as sources for “knowledge and help” but not at the time when he gave this interview. It is interesting that the year 1935, when he made this statement, proved to be an *annus mirabilis* for Modern Greek literature. In that year Giorgos Seferis published *Μυθιστόρημα*, Andreas Ebeirikos printed the surrealist *Υψικάμινος* and Odysseas Elytis published his first poems in the journal *Τα Νέα Γράμματα*. Moreover, 1935 was the year that saw the first collected edition of the poems by C. P. Cavafy.

Kazantzakis’ reading interest in Modern Greek literature was soon renewed. It is characteristic that his library contains a 1937 review by Elli Labridi which

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<sup>87</sup> Prevelakis 1984a: 172-173.

<sup>88</sup> Darakis 1935.

<sup>89</sup> Darakis 1935.

examined the Greek literary production of the last fifty years including notes.<sup>90</sup> From the early 1940s onwards, he was following the literary production of the established writers of the time while he was also reading selectively the works of younger poets and novelists. His renewed intensive reading of Modern Greek literature more or less coincided with the writing of the first major novel of his maturity, *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά*. Kazantzakis wrote the novel in two installments between 1941 and 1943 in Aegina during the Axis Occupation of Greece.<sup>91</sup> From 1942 he was working on the translation of Homer's *Odyssey* in collaboration with I. Th. Kakridis. At that time Kazantzakis read Medieval and Modern Greek literary texts so as to derive words from them that could be incorporated into the translation. Some of the texts that he read during that period were the poems by Ptochoprodromos, *Χρονικόν του Μωρέως*, *Διγενής Ακρίτης*, *Ερωτόκριτος*, Makrygiannis' *Απομνημονεύματα* and Kolokotronis' memoirs edited by Georgios Tertsetis.<sup>92</sup> From Kazantzakis' correspondence with Kakridis it emerges that he received in Aegina the books that he

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<sup>90</sup> Lambridis Hélé, *La Poésie grecque des cinquante dernières années*, Institut Balkanique, Beograd, 1937, *Revue Internationale des Études Balkaniques*, v.1, year 2, 1937. Detorakis and Katsalaki 1997: 133.

<sup>91</sup> Prevelakis 1984a: 387.

<sup>92</sup> In December 1942 Kazantzakis wrote to Kakridis: “Σας παρακαλώ πάλι να μου βρείτε για Οχτώβρη βιβλία για γλωσσικό υλικό -τον Ακρίτα, Χρονικά του Μωρέως, Μαχαιρα κλπ. να πάρουμε ό,τι γλωσσικό πλούτο μπορούμε”, Kazantzakis 1977b: 262. On 28 March 1945 he mentions that he resorts to the memoirs of Makrygiannis and those of Kolokotronis by Tertsetis as well as to *Ερωτόκριτος*: “Ξαναδιάβασα τον Μακρυγιάννη και τ’ Απομνημονεύματα του Κολοκοτρώνη από τον Τερτσέτη για να βρω πως λένε το «ευτείχεος». Δε λένε τίποτα. Κάπου μονάχα ο Κολ. λέει: «τειχογυρισμένη». Μα καλοτειχ. είναι ποια μεγάλη λέξη [...] Μύτη κονταριού=χαλος. Μύτη σαγίτας=χωνι. Έτσι το λέει ο Ερωτ. κι ο Ξανθουδ. έχει μια μελέτη σχετική σ’ ένα από τα Λεξ. αρχαία που μούστειλες, διορθώνοντας τη λαθεμένη του εξήγηση στο λεξιλόγιο του Ερωτόκριτου”, Kazantzakis 1977b: 276. “Σας παρακαλώ εφ’ως ως μπορέσετε, στείλετέ μου με τον ταχυδρόμο Σας τα βοηθητικά βιβλία για γλωσσική επικουρία: Χρονικό του Μωρέως, Πτωχοπρόδρομο, Μεσαιωνικά του Legrand, τη μελέτη για τα επίθετα εις -«ούσα», το Διγενή Ακρίτα κλπ.”. Kazantzakis 1977b: 262.

was requesting to read and afterwards he was returning them to Kakridis.<sup>93</sup> Hence, these books are not currently present in Kazantzakis' library.

In 1946 Kazantzakis moved from Aegina to France where he remained until his death in 1957. There he wrote the rest of the major novels of that period. From July to September 1948 in Antibes he wrote the novel *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται*. A few months earlier (30 March 1948), he had delivered a paper on Modern Greek literature in Paris in the "Congrès International de Littérature". The sixteen-page paper entitled "La Liberté dans la Littérature Néo-grecque" was a study exploring the theme of freedom in Modern Greek literature, a theme that we recurrently encounter in Kazantzakis' own work.<sup>94</sup> His paper commenced with the examination of the notion of freedom in the folk poetry of the fall of Constantinople and proceeded to its exploration until the literature of the 1940s referring also to the contemporary Greek history and the civil war that was raging in Greece.

In 1949-1950 Kazantzakis wrote the historical novel *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* which is set in Crete. From his correspondence with Prevelakis we know that before he started writing the novel Kazantzakis reread Prevelakis' fiction pertaining to Crete. On 2 December 1949 he said to Prevelakis: "Πριν αρχίσω να γράφω, ξαναδιάβασα τα τρία βιβλία Σας για την Κρήτη, με ολοένα μεγαλύτερη χαρά και με θαυμασμό. Τι γλώσσα, τι στέρεο ύφος, τι χτίσιμο χωρίς παραγεμίσματα".<sup>95</sup> In this passage Kazantzakis extols the books of Prevelakis about Crete that he read, namely *Παντέρμνη Κρήτη* (1945), and the first two volumes of the trilogy *Ο Κρητικός* which were *To*

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<sup>93</sup> "Σας εφχαριστώ πολύ για τα βιβλία. Πάντα κάποια ωφέλεια βρίσκω. Με τη Δδ. Κουλ. Σας γυρίζω μερικά, με την Ελένη, που σε λίγες μέρες έρχεται στην Αθήνα, τα επίλοιπα" wrote Kazantzakis to Kakridis on 1 January 1943. Kazantzakis 1977b: 264.

<sup>94</sup> Kazantzakis sent a copy of this paper to Prevelakis (Prevelakis 1984a: 587). The paper is currently unpublished and it is housed in Prevelakis' Archive at the library of the University of Crete.

<sup>95</sup> Letter 358 (3 December 1949) to Prevelakis in Prevelakis 1984a: 617.

*Δέντρο* (1948) and *Η πρώτη λευτεριά* (1949). The fact that Kazantzakis reread Prevelakis' novels shortly before he started writing his own novel, *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης*, reveals his endeavour to be aware of the context of Modern Greek works that preceded his own literary production.

Kazantzakis' interest in the association of his own work with Modern Greek literature was stated explicitly a few weeks earlier. In a letter to Minas Dimakis (15 November 1949) Kazantzakis expressed his indignation that for several months he had not received a Greek book and at the same time he stressed the importance for the placement of the literary work that he was writing within the context of the literary production of Modern Greece. He said characteristically:

Κ' έτσι μέσα στην απομόνωση, είναι σα να μάχουμαι ολομόναχος και δε βλέπω το επίλοιπο στράτευμα και ρίχνω στον ίδιο πάντα σκοπό, χωρίς να ξέρω αν αυτό αρμονίζεται με ολάκαιρη τη νεοελληνική μάχη. Παρηγοριέμαι μονάχα γιατί ξέρω πως καθένας φέρνει μέσα του ολόκληρη τη μάχη, δημιουργώντας τη. Κι' ένας αληθινός αγωνιστής δεν μπορεί παρά να πολεμάει σύμφωνα με το γενικό πλάνο της ράτσας του, και στον τομέα που πρέπει.<sup>96</sup>

This excerpt reveals that the reading interests of Kazantzakis with regard to Modern Greek literature were not irrelevant to his activity as an author. He paralleled the significance of reading the latest works of his fellow writers to a coordinated battle of warriors, a simile that seems to evoke the theme of war that is developed in *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* which he was then beginning to write.

In 1954 the books of Kazantzakis from his house in Aegina were dispatched to him to Antibes.<sup>97</sup> Kazantzakis bequeathed his library to the Historical Museum of

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<sup>96</sup> Letter of Kazantzakis to Dimakis on 15 November 1949. It was published in Dimakis 1975: 23-24.

<sup>97</sup> See the letters 394 (9.5.1954), 396 (24.5.1954), and 397 (4.7.1954) of Kazantzakis to Prevelakis in Prevelakis 1984a: 667, 670, 672.

Crete and his intention was expressed in a letter to the institution on 9 January 1957:

“Όχι μερικά πράματα που μου ανήκουν θα δώσω εφχαρίστως για το Μουσείο, παρά ό,τι πολύτιμο έχω που να σχετίζεται με τη μακρόχρονη, επίπονη πνευματική μου ζωή -όλη μου τη βιβλιοθήκη, χειρόγραφα, εικόνες, προσωπικά μου πράματα που αγάπησα και χρησιμοποίησα, μια μεταποίηση τέλεια του γραφείου μου στο Μεγάλο Κάστρο. Να σωθεί έτσι το κελί, όπου τόσα χρόνια δούλεψε ένας Καστρινός πνευματικός εργάτης...”.<sup>98</sup> A replica of Kazantzakis’ office in Antibes is currently housed at the Historical Museum of Crete in Heraklion and a catalogue of the books of his library was published in 1997.<sup>99</sup>

The books that he had procured for his library are a tangible proof of his eagerness for knowledge. They cover an exceptionally broad scope of areas. There are books of ancient Greek, Byzantine and Latin literature as well as books of English, French, Italian, German, Portuguese, American, Russian and Chinese literature, art, and culture. Moreover, his library includes books about history, politics, philosophy, psychology and science. The books of Modern Greek literature cover a large part of Kazantzakis’ library. From the contents of his library we glean the information that a large number of books was sent to him by the authors of the books themselves. This is revealed by the dedications on the first pages of books that his library includes. Some of the authors that had sent to him their books are for instance the following: Angelos Sikelianos, Giorgos Seferis, Odysseas Elytis, Giannis Ritsos, Nikos Pappas, Nikiphoros Vrettakos, Takis Sinopoulos, Nanos Valaoritis, Nikos Gkatsos, Miltos Sachtouris, Giorgos Sarandaris, Aris Diktaios, Nikos Engonopoulos, Nikos Kavvadias, Prevelakis, Photis Kondoglou, Kosmas Politis, Giorgos Theotokas, Stratis Myrivilis, Tatiana Gritsi-Milliex, M. Karagatsis, Thanasis Petsalis, Nikos Gavriel

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<sup>98</sup> Letter published in Detorakis and Katsalaki 1997: 7 and in Bien 2012: 833.

<sup>99</sup> Detorakis and Katsalaki 1997.

Pentzikis, Mimika Kranaki, Angelos Terzakis, Giannis Skaribas, Giannis Manglis, Mona Mitropoulou and Lilika Nakou.

There are dedications in the first pages of the books of Kazantzakis' library which provide interesting hints about his relations with fellow writers as well as his reading interests. It is noteworthy that the copy of the 1956 edition of Ritsos' long poem *Επιτάφιος* which is included in Kazantzakis' library bears the dedication: "Του αγαπημένου μας Νίκου Καζαντζάκη που πριν από είκοσι χρόνια είχε μιλήσει με πολλή αγάπη για τούτο το ποίημα. Άραγε άντεξε κάπως στο χρόνο; Με όλη μου την καρδιά, Γιάννης Ρίτσος".<sup>100</sup> *Επιτάφιος* which was written by Ritsos in 1936 circulated covertly in that year. In this note of 1956 Ritsos provides the information that Kazantzakis was one of the readers of the poem twenty years earlier and had praised its worthiness.

Broadly speaking, the presence of a book in Kazantzakis' library does not necessarily mean that he had read it, and vice versa: the absence of a book from it does not mean that he was unfamiliar with it. Nevertheless, in letters and interviews Kazantzakis referred to books that are found in his library and had been sent to him by the authors, which suggests that he was reading the books that interested him. For example, Dimakis had dispatched his poetic collections to Kazantzakis as handwritten dedications by the poet in the following books that are found in Kazantzakis' library reveal: *Φύλλα Τέχνης*, *Η Χαμένη Γη*, *Οι Τελευταίοι της Παράδοσης*, *Κάψαμε τα Κεράβια μας*, *Τα Πρώτα Ποιήματα*, *Σκοτεινό Πέρασμα*. In a letter to Dimakis on 27 November 1950 Kazantzakis referred to his poems and praised their style, content, and technique: "Μεγάλη άδολη χαρά μούδοκε η νέα Σου ποιητική συλλογή: ασίγαστη λυρική πνοή, συγκρατημένο πάθος, παληκαριά και τρυφερότητα -και το πιο δύσκολο:

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<sup>100</sup> The content of the dedications that is included in this section stems from my research in Kazantzakis' library at the Historical Museum of Crete.



μπόρεσες να βρεις το μέτρο ανάμεσα παλιάς ξεπερασμένης ποιητικής μορφής και μοντέρνας ασυνάρτητης κι άμορφης. Πέτυχες, θαρώ, ως φόρμα: την ισορόπηση ανάμεσα στους δυο αφτούς γκρεμούς κι ως περιεχόμενο: τη δυσκολότατη σύνθεση χάρης και δύναμης. Για όλα αυτά Σ' ευχαριστώ και χαίρουμαι".<sup>101</sup> Dimakis' as well as Aris Diktaios' work was praised by Kazantzakis also in a 1951 letter to his Swedish translator Börje Knös: "Yet I consider him [Nikos Papas] and his wife, Rita Boumi-Papa, and Minas Dimakis and Aris Diktaios to be splendid poets of the younger generation".<sup>102</sup> Some representatives of the younger generation of poets and novelists that were viewed favourably by Kazantzakis were Nikos Papas, Rita Papa, Minas Dimakis, Aris Diktaios, Stratis Tsirkas, Giannis Manglis and Eva Vlami.<sup>103</sup> Three years later, in 1954 Kazantzakis also referred to the literary production of the younger generation of writers from the Greek community of Alexandria in an interview with Gialourakis: "Οι νέοι; Η παράδοση δεν έσβησε. Παίρνω τα βιβλία τους. Δεν έχω καιρό πολύ να τα διαβάσω. Έχω να γράψω. Και βιάζομαι. Πρέπει να τα προφτάσω όλα. Όμως όταν μπορέσω, κάτι διαβάζω. Ξέρω αίφνης πως εσύ γράφεις ταξιδιωτικά. Ακόμη θυμάμαι πως εντύπωση μου κάμανε τα ποιήματα του Στρατή Τσίρκα".<sup>104</sup> In the library of Kazantzakis there is Tsirkas' book *Ο ύπνος του Θεριστή* which bears a dedication by Tsirkas written in 1953: "Στο Νίκο Καζαντζάκη του «Καπετάν Μιχάλη» που μπροστά του σκύβω συνεπαρμένος και άλαλος". As Kazantzakis mentioned in the interview with Gialourakis he and Tsirkas had not met in person. He also confirmed that he was receiving books from the younger generation of writers and that he was reading them selectively.

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<sup>101</sup> Dimakis 1975: 28.

<sup>102</sup> Bien 2012: 715-716.

<sup>103</sup> See Gialourakis 1964: 22. Also see Evelpidis 1962: 193.

<sup>104</sup> Gialourakis 1964: 21-22.

Kazantzakis was also interested in Greek literary works that had been translated into foreign languages. In a 1957 interview he claimed that Modern Greek literature was a literature of high quality and stressed the need for the production of more translations of Modern Greek literary works into other languages:

Είναι λυπηρό, προσέθεσε, πως η νεοελληνική λογοτεχνία δεν είναι αρκετά γνωστή στο εξωτερικό. Γιατί θεωρώ τη σημερινή λογοτεχνία μας ανώτερη από τη σύγχρονη γαλλική. Έχει βέβαια κι αυτή ακόμα αρκετούς καλούς συγγραφείς, όπως ο Βαλερύ, ο Μωριάκ κι ο Καμύς, αλλά παρουσιάζει σημάδια παρακμής. [...] Ο Θεοτόκης ξεχάστηκε γρήγορα. Και όμως έχει μεγάλη αξία και παρουσίασε σοβαρή επίδραση στα ελληνικά γράμματα. Από τα σύγχρονα έργα μεγάλη εντύπωση μου έκανε «Η Παναγιά η Γοργόνα» του Μυριβήλη. Είναι μεγάλος συγγραφέας και συστήνω σ' όλους μου τους ξένους εκδότες να μεταφράσουν το έργο του.<sup>105</sup>

Editions of Modern Greek texts translated into foreign languages are present in Kazantzakis' library which contains for example a French translation of Konstandinos Theotokis' *Ο Κατάδικος*<sup>106</sup> and a translation in German of Myrivilis' *Η Παναγιά η Γοργόνα*, a work to which he referred in the above interview.<sup>107</sup>

Overall, it can be observed that Kazantzakis had a long and profound acquaintance with contemporary Greek literature. This was also confirmed by Pouskouri who interviewed Kazantzakis in 1952. Pouskouri noted: "Ήταν [ο Καζαντζάκης] απόλυτα ενήμερος. Του άρεσε ο «Σκελετόβραχος» της Εύας Βλάμη για τη γλώσσα του και το γερό του χτίσιμο, αν και βρίσκει πολύ φολκκλωρισμό. Και τα «Ψάθινα Καπέλλα» της Λυμπεράκη, ενώ «Ο άλλος Αλέξανδρος», λέει, δεν αξίζει. Τα τραγούδια του Μηνά Δημάκη με την ηρωική απαισιοδοξία τους, ο Παπάς και η Παπαδιά -έτσι τους είπε- ο Βρεττάκος, ο Ρίτσος, ο Σεφέρης, άνθρωπος μορφωμένος

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<sup>105</sup> Evelpidis 1962: 192.

<sup>106</sup> Theotoki Constantin, *Le Condamné*, transl. Léon Krajewski, Calmann Lévy, Paris 1929. Detorakis and Katsalaki 1997: 164.

<sup>107</sup> Myrivilis Stratis, *Die Madonna mit dem Fischleib*, transl. Helmut Von den Steinen, Manesse, Zürich, 1955. Detorakis and Katsakaki 1997: 142.

και καλλιεργημένος, θυμίζει όμως Έλιοτ”.<sup>108</sup> Kazantzakis had first-hand knowledge of the established writers of the time most of whom he had met in person. He attested this in 1947 when Knös asked him to comment on the Greek writers of the time that were the most important in his opinion. Kazantzakis wrote: “Je m’empresse avec plaisir te répondre à Votre prière de Vous indiquer les poètes et les prosateurs que je considère les plus marquants dans la littérature néogrecque d’aujourd’hui. Je Vous confierai mon opinion sur chacun d’eux; je les connais bien comme hommes et comme intellectuels; et je suis, j’en suis sûr, impartial”.<sup>109</sup> By the 1940s and 1950s when Kazantzakis wrote the major novels of his maturity he was acquainted with the work of his fellow writers and he had known most of the established Greek writers both as intellectuals and as individuals.

## 1.2. KAZANTZAKIS’ EVALUATIONS OF MODERN GREEK LITERATURE

The preferences and choices of Kazantzakis from the literary tradition are mainly works that belong to the demotic tradition. *Διγενής Ακρίτης*, literary works of the Cretan literature and especially *Ερωτόκριτος*, folk poetry and the poetry of Dionysios Solomos are components of Modern Greek literature that are praised in the evaluations of Kazantzakis. Moreover, his literary choices and the argumentation that he put forward in his critical comments converge with those of the demoticists. It is well-known that Kazantzakis was an active exponent of demoticism.<sup>110</sup> He recognised that the contribution of Giannis Psycharis was pivotal for the development of Modern

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<sup>108</sup> Pouskouri 1952: 1389.

<sup>109</sup> Kazantzakis 1947.

<sup>110</sup> For an examination of the demoticism of Kazantzakis see Bien 1972.

Greek literature and viewed the publication of Psycharis' *To Ταξίδι μου* in 1888 as a breakthrough in Modern Greek literature and culture.<sup>111</sup> Kazantzakis had observed that after Psycharis significant writers of fiction appeared and he referred especially to the cases of Karkavitsas, Vlachogiannis, Nirvanas and Xenopoulos.<sup>112</sup> Kazantzakis placed his own literary production, as well as the work of contemporary Greek writers, on the path which Psycharis had paved.<sup>113</sup> He acknowledged Psycharis' contribution to Greek letters but he seemed to prefer his theoretical and polemical writings in comparison to his literary production.<sup>114</sup> After the establishment of the demotic language in literature, several views of the demoticists with regard to aesthetic and ideological issues could be expressed, but the richness and vividness of a work's language continued to be a chief criterion for Kazantzakis for the evaluation of a literary work.<sup>115</sup> Other features that he observed were the theme of a work, the ideas that were being developed in it and its connections with the present.

In 1929 Kazantzakis schematically divided contemporary Greek literature in categories. The first category included poets who did not reflect the modern currents of poetry, celebrated in an old language individual topics (women, religion, moon, spring) and did not play an active role in the formulation of the poetic reality ("en un

<sup>111</sup> Kazantzakis said about Psycharis' *To Ταξίδι μου*: "Au plus fort de la lutte, en 1888, parut un livre qui fit époque non seulement dans le développement de la littérature, mais aussi dans toute la vie culturelle de la Grèce contemporaine". Kazantzakis 1929: 5.

<sup>112</sup> Kazantzakis 1948.

<sup>113</sup> "[...] Άνοιξε το δρόμο, σας λέω, μπήκαμε. Όσο θα υπάρχουν ελληνικά γράματα, αφτός θα ζει και θα βασιλέβει. Εμείς είμαστε τα παιδιά, τ' αγγόνια του, θα πεθάνουμε. Μα ο Παπούς, η ρίζα, είναι αθάνατη". Kazantzakis 1954a: 566.

<sup>114</sup> It becomes apparent in a letter of Kazantzakis to Prevelakis on 27 August 1929 that he preferred the words that the people used instead of words artificially coined by the author. Prevelakis 1984a: 148. On 12 September 1929 Kazantzakis also said to Prevelakis: "Τώρα 'ποξεφύλισσα τις Πρωτο[οπορίες] που έλαβα, και χάρηκα πολύ ό,τι πολεμική έχει εκεί ο Ψυχάρης. Θάμα είναι αυτός ο γέρος, και κανένας δεν έχει τόσο κέφι, δύναμη, χάρη και δηλητήριο στην πολεμική του, σαν αυτόν. Ό,τι δημιουργικό γράφει, δε μ' ενδιαφέρει". Prevelakis 1984a: 160.

<sup>115</sup> In a letter to Delmouzos on 4 February 1919 Kazantzakis observed: "τόρα που κερδήθηκε η πρώτη νίκη, η γλωσσική, κι άρχισαν να εντείνονται, λέφτερες τώρα, οι διαφορετικές αντίθεσες των δημοτικιστών σε άλλες ιδεολογίες". Kazantzakis 1958c: 1446.

mot, ils continuent à jouer un rôle décoratif”).<sup>116</sup> Kazantzakis ranked Sikelianos as the best among this group of poets referring especially to the Hellenic and pagan features of his poems. The second group contained the poets who expressed the atmosphere of their time and the voice of the people and satirised the institutions of religion, patriotism and the bourgeois society. This group was assessed favourably by Kazantzakis who deemed as the best among them the poet Kostas Varnalis.

Later, he divided the contemporary literature of Modern Greece in three categories. The first category comprised the works that were inspired by the present and were attempting to reflect the conditions of the future. The second are the romantics who view the past with nostalgia, and the third category consists of writers who express the present.<sup>117</sup> Kazantzakis characterised these categories with the words *φυγή*, *σύνθεση* and *αποσύνθεση* that corresponded to the literature that developed themes of the past, the present and the future.<sup>118</sup> An exploration of the critical views that Kazantzakis expressed regarding selected works, authors and periods of Modern Greek literature starting from the early works of the Modern Greek literary tradition and progressing to the contemporary literature of the Generation of the Thirties will be presented in the subsequent paragraphs.

#### *Διγενής Ακρίτης*

Kazantzakis signed with the pen name “Ακρίτας” a series of occasional pieces (Χρονογραφήματα) that were published from 14 April 1907 to 5 June 1907 in the newspaper *Ακρόπολις* and also his publications in *Νέον Άστυ* from 25 October 1907

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<sup>116</sup> Kazantzakis 1929: 5.

<sup>117</sup> Kazantzakis 1947.

<sup>118</sup> Kazantzakis 1954b: 1636-1638. Also see Gialourakis 1954 and Evelpidis 1962.

up to 8 March 1908.<sup>119</sup> This pen name in 1907 and 1908 shows Kazantzakis' early acquaintance with the figure of Digenis Akritis and also the influence that it exerted on him in order to employ it as his pen name. The use of the pen name "Ακρίτας" by Kazantzakis occurred a few months after Nikolaos G. Politis' speech about the epic, something that suggests that Kazantzakis was familiar with it. Kazantzakis acquired his degree in Law from the University of Athens on 9 December 1906 when N. G. Politis was the Rector and Palamas was the secretary.<sup>120</sup> Politis in his inaugural speech as the Rector of the University of Athens that was delivered on 14 January 1907 and was entitled "Περί του εθνικού έπους των νεοτέρων Ελλήνων" articulated his views on the epic of Digenis Akritis.<sup>121</sup>

In his speech Politis referred to the epic's national dimension and situated it at the beginning of Modern Greek literature: "Διά τούτο ασφαλεστάτη αφετηρία της νέας ελληνικής ποιήσεως δύναται να χρησιμεύση το εθνικόν έπος, εν ω παρακολουθούμεν την ιστορικήν ανάπτυξιν της ελληνικής ψυχής, και όπερ πραγματευόμενον περί της συγκρούσεως του ελληνικού προς τον μουσουλμανικόν κόσμον και την υπεροχήν του ελληνικού επιδεικνύον και προοιωνιζόμενον την οριστικήν τούτου καθυπερτέρησιν περικλείει τα ιδεώδη και τους πόθους του ελληνικού γένους".<sup>122</sup> Politis expected that Modern Greek literature will be influenced by the epic of Digenis ("Εκ της επιδράσεως του ακριτικού έπους και της αναγεννώμενης λογοτεχνίας ημών πολλά προσδοκώμεν αγαθά")<sup>123</sup> and put forward the view that *Διγενής Ακρίτης* is the national epic of the Modern Greeks depicting the

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<sup>119</sup> See Katsibalis 1958: 13, 18. Numbers 115-138 and 226-228, 230 respectively.

<sup>120</sup> See Prevelakis 1984a: 4.

<sup>121</sup> N. G. Politis 1920: 237-260.

<sup>122</sup> N. G. Politis 1920: 260.

<sup>123</sup> N. G. Politis 1920: 259.

clash between the Greeks and the Muslims. This view projected the Great Idea of the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>124</sup>

Politis' speech was supported by Palamas in a letter published in *O Nouμάς* on 6 May 1907 entitled “Από την αφορμή ενός λόγου για το εθνικό έπος των νεοτέρων Ελλήνων”. Palamas stressed the ideological significance of Digenis and expected that his poetic generation would produce a poem that would have been influenced by Digenis Akritis: “Το επαγγελλόμενο ποίημα, καθώς ταλαφροζάνοιξε απόμακρα ο Πολίτης, πιστεύω πως σιγά σιγά προετοιμάζεται από τη γενεά μας την ποιητική”.<sup>125</sup> He implied that he intended to write a drama with Digenis as the main character although he never did. Similarly Psycharis wanted to write a national novel about Digenis but did not either.<sup>126</sup>

Kazantzakis also aimed at writing an epic to be called “Ακρίτας” although he never managed to produce this work. For many years he was preparing to write this epic and in 1939-1940 during his visit in England he sketched a detailed outline of its plot. In one notebook entitled “Ακρίτας” the outline of the epic is included with the date 1940.<sup>127</sup> This outline reveals that Kazantzakis planned to connect his epic with ancient, Byzantine and Modern Greek literature as well as modern political theories. Other components of the Modern Greek literary tradition that are included in the outline of Kazantzakis' “Ακρίτας” are *κλέφτικα*, Solomos' Cretan origins and also the battles in Solomos' *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι*.

In 1909 Kazantzakis made a short reference to the character of Digenis in the critical note that he published about the poem “Ο Απέθαντος” by Sotiris Skipis. He

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<sup>124</sup> See Beaton 2007: 191-203.

<sup>125</sup> Palamas n.d.: 487-511, volume 6.

<sup>126</sup> See Tziovas 1986: 226.

<sup>127</sup> Prevelakis 1984a: 487-489.

developed the notion of the quest of the Greeks for modern identity (“Να κατορθώσουμε να βρούμε την κλασσική έκφραση της νεώτερης ψυχής, –να το πρόβλημα”).<sup>128</sup> Moreover, Kazantzakis discussed the mixture of classical antiquity and romanticism in Goethe: “Ο Γκαίτε στο β’ του Φάουστ θέλησε φαίνεται το πρόβλημα αυτό να λύσει σμίγοντας την Ελένη με το Φάουστ. Την κλασσικήν αρχαιότητα και το ρομαντισμό. Και γέννησαν τον Ευφορίωνα”<sup>129</sup> and connected Euphorion with Digenis with regard to the fusion of traditions: “Ας μην ξεχνά ποτέ του όμως το μυστήριο του Γάμου που γεννά τους Ευφορίωνες και τους Διγενήδες”.<sup>130</sup> Kazantzakis presented the character of Digenis as a fusion of diverse cultural elements.

In 1923 Kazantzakis composed *Ασκητική* which was published in 1927. At the end of *Ασκητική* God is presented as an “Akritas Digenis” who is fighting on the borders while the human heart is depicted as the threshing floor where Akritas fights with Charos:

ΠΙΣΤΕΥΩ Σ’ ΕΝΑ ΘΕΟ, ΑΚΡΙΤΑ ΔΙΓΕΝΗ, ΣΤΡΑΤΕΥΟΜΕΝΟ, ΠΑΣΧΟΝΤΑ,  
ΜΕΓΑΛΟΔΥΝΑΜΟ, ΟΧΙ ΠΑΝΤΟΔΥΝΑΜΟ, ΠΟΛΕΜΙΣΤΗ ΣΤ’ ΑΚΡΟΤΑΤΑ  
ΣΥΝΟΡΑ, ΣΤΡΑΤΗΓΟ ΑΥΤΟΚΡΑΤΟΡΑ ΣΕ ΟΛΕΣ ΤΙΣ ΦΩΤΕΙΝΕΣ ΔΥΝΑΜΕΣ,  
ΤΙΣ ΟΡΑΤΕΣ ΚΑΙ ΤΙΣ ΑΟΡΑΤΕΣ. [...] ΠΙΣΤΕΥΩ ΣΤΗΝ ΚΑΡΔΙΑ ΤΟΥ  
ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΥ, ΤΟ ΧΩΜΑΤΕΝΙΟ ΑΛΩΝΙ, ΟΠΟΥ ΜΕΡΑ ΚΑΙ ΝΥΧΤΑ ΠΑΛΕΥΕΙ  
Ο ΑΚΡΙΤΑΣ ΜΕ ΤΟ ΘΑΝΑΤΟ.<sup>131</sup>

The image of Akritas’ combat against Charos at the threshing floor is found in the Akritic cycle of songs but it is not included in the epic of Digenis. In this passage Akritas is explicitly characterised as a God and this is supported by the vocabulary

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<sup>128</sup> Kazantzakis 1909d: 123.

<sup>129</sup> Kazantzakis 1909d: 124.

<sup>130</sup> Kazantzakis 1909d: 128.

<sup>131</sup> Kazantzakis 1971: 94-95.



and syntax from the Christian tradition that is employed at the beginning of the passage (“Πιστεύω σ’ ένα Θεό”).<sup>132</sup>

In the travel book about Greece Kazantzakis also referred to the Byzantine romance and commented on the combination of cultural traditions: “Στην κλασικήν Ελλάδα μπολιάστηκε αλλόκοτος ρομαντικός πολιτισμός. Βγήκαν απροσδόκητοι φιλολογικοί καρποί: *Καλλίμαχος και Χρυσορρόη, Λίβιστρος και Ροδάμνη, Βέλθανδρος και Χρυσάντζα, Φλώριος και Πλάτζια Φλώρα, Ιμπέριος και Μαργαρώνα...* Λες κι ένας καινούριος Ευφορίων, ο ανώτατος Γασμούλος, ο ερωτικός καρπός του Φάουστ και της Ελένης, θα γεννιόταν τώρα στο ελληνικό χώμα”.<sup>133</sup> Kazantzakis referred to Digenis and the integration of cultural traditions in the last chapter of his travel book on Morea which is entitled “Τα προβλήματα του νεοελληνικού πολιτισμού” and had been published in 1937 in *Καθημερινή*. This text later appeared with the title “Ο Διγενής νεοελληνικός πολιτισμός” in 1946 in *Φιλολογικά Χρονικά*.<sup>134</sup> The figure of Digenis had been connected to the national consciousness of Modern Greece in Politis’ speech but this was then questioned due to Digenis’ double descent from two nations. In Kazantzakis’ work Digenis is symbolically a national hero exactly because of his double origins. According to Kazantzakis, Digenis exemplifies the merging of Greece and the East whose synthesis is the quest of the Modern Greeks (“Ο Διγενής, από πατέρα Έλληνα και μάνα Ανατολίτισσα, είναι, το νιώθεις, ο συμβολικός ήρωας της ράτσας”).<sup>135</sup> Kazantzakis connected the story of Digenis with the national consciousness of the Modern Greeks and presented Digenis as the “symbolic hero of the Greeks” who encapsulates the national soul (“η Διγενής ψυχή του

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<sup>132</sup> Kazantzakis 1971: 94.

<sup>133</sup> Kazantzakis 1965: 219.

<sup>134</sup> Kazantzakis 1946: 1-5.

<sup>135</sup> Kazantzakis 1965: 325.

Νεοέλληνα”).<sup>136</sup> Digenis and his double origins exemplify the struggle of the Modern Greeks to absorb the promiscuous elements from the past and to balance the Eastern and the Western culture.<sup>137</sup> The importance of Digenis for Kazantzakis lies in the national discourse that was developed rather than in a literary or aesthetic estimation of the work.

At the end of this text Kazantzakis quotes a phrase from Ion Dragoumis and refers to matters that are pivotal in Dragoumis’ national ideology as they were developed in *Ο Ελληνικός Πολιτισμός*. In the poem “Χαιρετισμός στον Ίωνα Δραγούμη” published in 1941, Kazantzakis presented Dragoumis as an Akritas who measures the borders:

λιγνός Ακρίτας τρογυρνάει τη χώρα,  
τα σύνορα μετράει, μετράει το νουμας.<sup>138</sup>

In his travel book on England Kazantzakis writes that “Ο Ίων Δραγούμης κι ο Πέτρος Βλαστός είναι, θαρρώ, οι δυο άνθρωποι που περισσότερο τίμησα κι αγάπησα στη ζωή μου”.<sup>139</sup> Similarly Kazantzakis described Petros Vlastos as Akritas (“τον ατρόμητο Ακρίτα της γλώσσας μας”).<sup>140</sup> In this way Kazantzakis extends the metaphor of the borderer to the language question.

In 1941-1943 Kazantzakis wrote the novel *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά*. In the novel Stavridakis sends a letter to the narrator in which he elaborates on the importance of Digenis as the symbolic hero of the nation:

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<sup>136</sup> Kazantzakis 1965: 325.

<sup>137</sup> See Karalis 1994: 109-119.

<sup>138</sup> Kazantzakis 1941: 223.

<sup>139</sup> Kazantzakis 1962a: 107-108.

<sup>140</sup> Kazantzakis 1938b: 222.

Έχουμε όλοι τον ίδιο αρχηγό· εσύ τον λες Οδυσέα, άλλοι Κωνσταντίνο Παλαιολόγο, όχι αυτόν που σκοτώθηκε, παρά τον άλλο, τον μαρμαρωμένο του παραμυθιού. Εγώ, με την άδειά σου, τον αρχηγό αυτόν της ράτσας μας τον λέω Ακρίτα. Η λέξη αυτή μου αρέσει πιο πολύ, είναι πιο αυστηρή και πολεμόχαρη, γιατί ευτύς ως την ακούσεις τινάζεται μέσα σου πάνοπλος ο αιώνιος Έλληνας, που μάχεται ακατάπαυτα στις άκρες, στα σύνορα. Στα κάθε σύνορα –εθνικά, πνευματικά, ψυχικά. Κι αν πεις και Διγενής, ακόμα πιο βαθιά στοράς τη ράτσα μας, την εξάισια σύνθεση Ανατολής και Δύσης.<sup>141</sup>

In the novel Stavridakis puts forward the view that Digenis encapsulates the fusion of the East and the West. Whereas in the travel book on Morea the narrator focuses on the synthesis as a goal that the Greeks are struggling to achieve, in Stavridakis' words in the novel it is seen as an exceptional synthesis (“εξάισια σύνθεση”).

The word Akritas is used in a context of war in Kazantzakis' texts and the word Digenis for references to the cultural elements of Modern Greece. Overall, Kazantzakis appropriated the figure of Akritas as a symbol that exemplified a persona of himself as his pen name, as a personification of the divine in *Ασκητική*, of the personalities that he admired and as a symbol of the merging of cultures for the Modern Greeks. Digenis is a figure that for Kazantzakis acquired heroic, national, religious and cultural connotations.

#### *Ερωτόκριτος and Ερωφίλη*

Although Kazantzakis did not produce a study about the works of the Cretan Renaissance, he made references to them in key pieces that he published. The main issues that he raised with regard to them were the vernacular language and the cross-

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<sup>141</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 152-153.

fertilisation of cultures during the Venetian occupation of Crete. The vernacular language of the works had been a reason for their disregard by the learned during the eighteenth and nineteenth century. *Ερωτόκριτος* had received negative criticism for its vernacular language and a history of the evaluations of it is found in the edition of *Ερωτόκριτος* by Stephanos Xanthoudidis in 1915.<sup>142</sup> This picture changed especially with the contribution of the demoticists until the works were gradually considered an integral part of the literary canon.<sup>143</sup>

In 1906 Palamas in an article on *Ερωτόκριτος* (“Για τον «Ερωτόκριτο»”) stressed the national character of the work.<sup>144</sup> In a letter that Kazantzakis sent to Palamas two years later, on 12 September 1908, he connected the literary works of the Cretan Renaissance with the cause of the demoticists: “[...] να δούμε πως πρέπει να ενεργήσουμε για να μπει το γλωσσικό ζήτημα στην Κρητικιά Βουλή και ν’ αρχίσει η εκπαιδευτική μας αναγέννηση από την Κρήτη πρώτα, γιατί η Πατρίδα του Χορτάτση και του Κορνάρου πρέπει βέβαια νάχει την αξίωση και το καθήκον ν’ ανοίξει πρώτη τη Μεγάλη τη Στράτα του λυτρωμού”.<sup>145</sup> Kazantzakis became the president of the demoticist “Solomos” Society of Heraklion in 1909 and composed a manifesto that expressed its goals. It was published anonymously in *Ο Νουμάς*.<sup>146</sup> The cause of the demoticist society of Heraklion was connected with the literary tradition of Crete and especially with the works of Kornaros and Chortatsis: “Μα ο ήλιος της Αλήθειας πάντα του ανατέλλει όσο πολύ κι αν βάσταξε η νύχτα της ψευτιάς. Κ’ είναι φυσικό να πρωτοροδίσει τα Κρητικά βουνά. Γιατί από δω ξαναβγήκε τώρα και 300 χρόνια με τον Κορνάρο και το Χορτάτση. Αν δεν είχε πέσει απάνω μας η νύχτα της τούρκικης

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<sup>142</sup> Xanthoudidis 1915: CXL-CXLI.

<sup>143</sup> See Tziovas 1986: 220-228.

<sup>144</sup> Palamas n.d.: 301-306, volume 6.

<sup>145</sup> Kasinis 1986: 1299.

<sup>146</sup> Kazantzakis 1909e: 9-12. It was republished in E. Alexiou and G. Stephanakis 1977: 122-140.

σκλαβιάς, το γλωσσικό ζήτημα θα τόχαμε εμείς οι Κρητικοί λυμένο τώρα και 300 χρόνια”.<sup>147</sup> *Ερωτόκριτος* was employed in the argumentation of the demoticists in order to show that there is a pre-existing tradition of literature written in the demotic language. In the manifesto of the demoticist society of Heraklion the connection of the demotic language with the literature that was produced in Crete during the Renaissance was highlighted. The fall of Crete to the Turks in 1669 was presented by Kazantzakis as one of the reasons that triggered the language question because in that period the artistic and literary activity that had flourished during the Venetian occupation of Crete stopped.

In 1915 the edition of *Ερωτόκριτος* by Xanthoudidis was published. The publisher was Stylianos M. Alexiou, the father of Kazantzakis’ first wife, Galateia. In 1955, forty years after this edition, Kazantzakis in a letter to Lefteris Alexiou, the son of Stylianos M. Alexiou, acknowledged that “*Erotokritos* would not have been printed without the elder Alexiou, with his wisdom and his material sacrifices”.<sup>148</sup> Kazantzakis had read the article by Lefteris Alexiou that was published in *Κρητικά Χρονικά* regarding the 1915 edition of *Ερωτόκριτος* entitled “Για τα σαραντάχρονα της κριτικής έκδοσης του «Ρωτόκριτου» (1915-1955). Μια δίκαιη αποκατάσταση”.<sup>149</sup> Alexiou’s article provided information about the initial contribution of Stylianos M. Alexiou on a philological level along with Xanthoudidis to the edition of *Ερωτόκριτος* and his subsequent withdrawal from it after their disagreement regarding the phonetic presentation of the text in the Cretan dialect.

The initial philological contribution of Stylianos M. Alexiou in the edition of *Ερωτόκριτος* had also been discussed by Kriaras in an article that was published in

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<sup>147</sup> Alexiou and Stephanakis 1977: 139.

<sup>148</sup> Kazantzakis’ letter (26 July 1955) to Lefteris Alexiou published in Bien 2012: 795.

<sup>149</sup> L. Alexiou 1954: 485-498.

1943 in *Νέα Εστία*.<sup>150</sup> The previous issue of the same periodical included an essay by Kazantzakis entitled “Ένα σχόλιο στην *Οδύσσεια*”.<sup>151</sup> It was a reply to Laourdas’ critique of Kazantzakis’ epic *Οδύσσεια*. Kazantzakis expressed his views about the language of the text, its generic form and its ideological orientation. In this article he developed the concept of the “Cretan glance” and his perceptions of Crete as a cultural crossroad. In the context of this discussion he referred to Kornaros and Chortatsis: “Η Κρήτη (για μένα, –όχι φυσικά, για όλους τους Κρητικούς, πολύ λιγότερο για τον Ερωτόκριτο και την Ερωφίλη, που ο πατέρας τους είχαν Βενετσιάνος) η Κρήτη είναι η σύνθεση που πάντα μου επιδιώκω. Η σύνθεση Ελλάδας και Ανατολής”.<sup>152</sup> The cultural synthesis of the West and the East was a distinguishing characteristic of Crete in the view of Kazantzakis. He presented himself as a writer who had been influenced by the Ottoman occupation of the island while he viewed Kornaros and Chortatsis as writers who were influenced by the cross-fertilisation of cultures during the Venetian occupation of Crete.

The literary works of the Venetian period of Crete were viewed by Kazantzakis as components of an artistic and cultural Renaissance. The relationship of Cretan literature with the Western literature and its characterisation as a Renaissance was an issue that was being discussed in the philological studies of the time.<sup>153</sup> In 1955 Kazantzakis published an essay entitled “Crete” in the American journal *Holiday* where he described a journey around Crete. He referred to the Venetian period of Crete with the following words: “While the rest of Greece, after 1453, was

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<sup>150</sup> Kriaras 1943: 1149-1150.

<sup>151</sup> Kazantzakis 1943: 1028-1034.

<sup>152</sup> Kazantzakis 1943: 1033.

<sup>153</sup> In the article “Η κρητική λογοτεχνία και η εποχή της” in 1954 Stylianos Alexiou had connected the Cretan literature with the other arts and referred to the renaissance of Crete: “Το συμπέρασμα για τον αναγεννησιακό χαρακτήρα του ΙΖ’ αιώνα στην Κρήτη βγαίνει όχι μόνο από τη λογοτεχνία, παρά και από τις καλές τέχνες της εποχής”. S. Alexiou 1954: 90.

under the Turkish yoke, the Cretans were under the more cultured rule of Venice and created significant works of art: lyric poetry, plays, the great epic *Erotokritos*, as well as fine religious music and painting –a whole culture in fact, a Cretan Renaissance”.<sup>154</sup> Kazantzakis connected Cretan literature and especially *Ερωτόκριτος*, which is here characterised as an epic,<sup>155</sup> with the theatre, music as well as painting and presented it as part of a broad and multifaceted artistic phenomenon that he characterised as Cretan Renaissance.

### *Greek Folk Poetry*

Kazantzakis views’ about folk poetry are traced in the early critical reviews that he published as well as in subsequent essays. In 1909, Kazantzakis expressed his opinion on folk poetry in a review of Pavlos Nirvanas’ play *Μαρία Πενταγιώτισσα* which had been published in the same year.<sup>156</sup> Kazantzakis observed that in this play the heroine’s personality is totally different from that in the folk song. While the folk song depicted her as ruthlessly causing the death of men, in Nirvanas’ play she killed herself. Kazantzakis disagreed with the depiction of the heroine as obsequious. He mentioned that if she was depicted with the vigorousness that he suggested, the work would have been genuinely Greek like Palamas’ “immortal” *Θάνατος Παλληκαριού*. In Kazantzakis’ view, the fatal character of the heroine’s absolute beauty as it is depicted in the folk song is analogous to previous figures that had been developed in

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<sup>154</sup> Kazantzakis 1955: 36-37.

<sup>155</sup> Although in the current bibliography *Ερωτόκριτος* is broadly characterised as a romance, many scholars have described it as an epic especially due to the scenes of war that it contains. For example, Xanthoudidis in his study on the period of the Venetian occupation of Crete that is included in Kazantzakis’ library characterised *Ερωτόκριτος* as epic (Xanthoudidis 1939). The connection of Kazantzakis’ own epic *Οδύσσεια* with *Ερωτόκριτος* is noted in S. Alexiou 1995: λθ’. Also see A. Diktaios 1963: 433.

<sup>156</sup> Kazantzakis 1909b: 51-58.

an analogous manner such as Helen of Troy in the *Iliad*, the figure of Magdalene in the Christian tradition as well as the character of Mitros in Palamas' *Θάνατος Παλληκαριού* which according to Kazantzakis constitutes the quintessence of Greekness. Kazantzakis writes:

Θα είτανε γνήσια ελληνικό και θα γιοφύρωνε τέλεια όλη την απόσταση που μας χωρίζει από τα τείχη της Τροίας ως τις βρύσες με τις ώριες κοπέλες του νεώτερου χωριού –αν του δινε τη σημασία που νομίζω πως έχει. Θα είτανε τότε η ίδια αντίληψη που έσπρωξε τον κ. Παλαμά να δημιουργήσει τον ελληνικότατο κι αθάνατο «Θάνατο του Παληκαριού» του. [...] Είναι μεγάλη η απαίτηση να ζητούμε Ντανουντσιακή εχτέλεση στα δημοτικά μας τραγούδια; Δεν ξέρω. Μα τότε γιατί να τ' αγγίζουμε τα τραγούδια μας δραματοποιώντας τα, αφού, αντί να τα πλατύνουμε και να τα βαθύνουμε, τα στενεύουμε και τα γδύνουμε από τη φρίκη του τραγικού που με τόση απλότητα ξεπετιέται από κάθε τους λέξη;<sup>157</sup>

His arguments about the relation of beauty and death reflect the notions of aestheticism that interested him in that period and characterised his novella *Όφρις και Κρίνο*. Kazantzakis put forward the view that folk poetry should be creatively reworked from a comparative perspective.

In 1916 Nikolaos Politis delivered a speech entitled “Γνωστοί Πουηταί Δημοτικών Ασμάτων” in the philological association Parnassos.<sup>158</sup> Politis presented an exploration of the composers of folk songs whose names are known from the period of the fall of Constantinople, as well as the folk poetry of Crete, Cyprus, and the Greek revolution. Kazantzakis published an article in which he praised this paper as well as the work of N. G. Politis, who is considered the founder of folkloric studies in Greece.<sup>159</sup> Kazantzakis referred to the convergences between folk poetry and the Homeric epics and argued that through the folk songs the cohesion of the nation is

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<sup>157</sup> Kazantzakis 1909b: 52, 54.

<sup>158</sup> N. G. Politis 1920: 211-236.

<sup>159</sup> Kazantzakis 1916: 198-200.



maintained: “Τα δημοτικά τραγούδια, με τον τρόπον αυτό, διαιωνίζουν τις βαθύτερες ορμές μιας φυλής και συντηρούν, με το λαμπρό σώμα της Τέχνης, ακέραιη πάντα τη θρυματισμένη στα μάτια της λογικής και της ιστορίας συνοχή του Έθνους”.<sup>160</sup> Later, in 1948 Kazantzakis explored the folk poetry with regard to the development of the notion of freedom.<sup>161</sup> He referred to the folk songs of the fall of Constantinople and argued that two features that characterised them were the passion for life and for freedom. He observed that at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Rigas Velestinlis was the most prominent figure celebrating freedom and quoted the famous initial lines of Rigas’ *Θούριος* noting that Rigas’ words called to arms the Balkan peoples. Kazantzakis noted that Solomos was one of the first Modern Greek authors who had realised the value of the folk language and songs which were characterised by him as the soul of the Greeks.<sup>162</sup> Overall, a diachronic and comparative reading is presented in the evaluations of Kazantzakis of folk songs juxtaposing them with literary works from several periods and styles.

### *Solomos and the Heptanesian Poets*

Solomos appears to be the Modern Greek poet that Kazantzakis mostly admired viewing his poems as incomplete masterpieces. In 1929 he argued that in Modern Greek literature three poets were standing out: Solomos, Valaoritis and Palamas. As Kazantzakis claimed, Solomos occupied the first place among them: “la voix d’un grand poète, du plus grand poète de la Grèce moderne”.<sup>163</sup> Features of Solomos’ poetry that Kazantzakis observed pertained to the combination of a

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<sup>160</sup> Kazantzakis 1916: 199.

<sup>161</sup> Kazantzakis 1948.

<sup>162</sup> Kazantzakis 1948.

<sup>163</sup> Kazantzakis 1948.

revolutionary impetus and a classical form, the convergences with romanticism and also the fragmentary character of his work. Kazantzakis referred in particular to the “admirable clarity” of the poem *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι* as well as the concept of art and the meditations of the poet about it: “*Le maître invisible*, comme Solomos appelait la méditation artistique doit s’élever verticalement au centre du poème et autour de lui doivent s’épanouir et s’étendre vers la périphérie tous les “plans secondaires”, de même que les branches se groupent autour du tronc vivant”.<sup>164</sup> Kazantzakis noted that Solomos celebrated in his poetry the warriors of the Greek revolution, the death of the philhellene Byron, and wrote *Ύμνος εις την ελευθερίαν* which became the national anthem of Greece, although the poet did not actively participate in the battles.<sup>165</sup> He also put forward the view that if Solomos had participated in the Greek war of independence he may have not produced the poems about it and instead of creating art he may have only written battle hymns.<sup>166</sup>

According to Kazantzakis, on the one hand the ideological basis of *Ο Λάμπρος* is set in the Romantic Movement but on the other hand due to the distinguished clarity and frugality of Solomos’ style it surpassed the limitations of romanticism. As Kazantzakis claimed, Solomos succeeded in creating poetry which bore his own seal:

Comme tous les poètes de cette époque, Solomos dûit son tribut au romantisme. Son Lambros, le héros d’un grand poème du même nom, resté sans succès, le grand homme à la mesure de Byron, chargé de vices et de vertus, –est une personnalité extrêmement compliquée et «fatale». Mais Solomos s’engagea dans la lutte contre le romantisme, et il n’y réussit pas facilement; il dut soutenir une lutte longue et difficile avant d’arriver à cette conception pure et sévère de l’art que nous associons maintenant à son nom.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Kazantzakis 1929: 5.

<sup>165</sup> Kazantzakis 1929: 5.

<sup>166</sup> Interview of Kazantzakis published in Darakis 1935.

<sup>167</sup> Kazantzakis 1929: 5.

Kazantzakis expressed his disapproval of the way that romanticism was manifested in Greek literature both because of its archaic language and of what he saw as hackneyed motifs and themes. A feature that Kazantzakis mainly rejected was nostalgia for the past. His criticism was focused on the Athenian School of romanticism whose poetry was written in katharevousa.<sup>168</sup> In 1948 Kazantzakis claimed that katharevousa had condemned Greeks into slavery and had deprived the Greek soul of its freedom.<sup>169</sup> Interestingly, he criticised katharevousa through a metaphor that had been employed in Solomos' *Διάλογος* that was written in 1824-1825. Solomos' *Διάλογος* consists of a discussion between the pedant, a supporter of katharevousa, and the poet, who advocated the demotic language. It develops the idea that the liberation from the Ottoman rule will coincide with the triumph of the demotic language. When the pedant referred to freedom, the poet presented katharevousa as a lack of linguistic freedom:

ΣΟΦΟΛΟΓΙΟΤΑΤΟΣ: Εμείς, εμείς, θέλει σηκώσουμε τους στύλους της γλώσσας, τώρα που η ελευθερία...

ΠΟΙΗΤΗΣ: Δεν υποφέρεσαι πλέον! Εσείς, εσείς θέλει σηκώσετε τους ίδιους στύλους όπου έστησε περνώντας από την Παλαιστίνη ο Σέσωστρις! Δεν υποφέρεσαι πλέον! Εσύ ομιλείς για ελευθερία; Εσύ, όπου έχεις αλυσωμένον τον νουν σου από όσες περισπωμένες εγράφηκαν από την εφεύρεση της ορθογραφίας έως τώρα, εσύ ομιλείς για ελευθερία;<sup>170</sup>

The fragmentary character of Solomos' poetry was another feature that was examined by Kazantzakis. Kazantzakis compared Solomos' poems to the longer poems of Palamas and argued that the few words of the first have an evocative nature

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<sup>168</sup> For an examination of the language of Solomos and Kazantzakis see Philippaki-Warburton 2005: 119-131.

<sup>169</sup> Kazantzakis 1948.

<sup>170</sup> Solomos 1994: 548.

that the large-scale poetry of Palamas lacks.<sup>171</sup> According to Kazantzakis, Solomos at the end of his life had reached the peak of poetry which is simplicity.<sup>172</sup>

We mentioned above that in 1929 Kazantzakis recognised apart from Solomos another Heptanesian poet to be standing out in Modern Greek literature, namely Aristotelis Valaoritis. What attracted the attention of Kazantzakis to the poetry of Valaoritis, was also the demotic language. Kazantzakis highlighted the linguistic richness in Valaoritis' poetry and noted that it had been crucial for the development of Modern Greek literature.<sup>173</sup> Kazantzakis also detected flaws in the content and style of Valaoritis' work such as superficial rhetoric and viewed *Αστράπογιαννος* and *Κυρά Φροσύνη* as works that bear the characteristics of romanticism.<sup>174</sup> The language of the Zakynthian poet, Kalvos, where the archaic elements are fused with demotic ones was characterised by Kazantzakis as personal and peculiar. Kazantzakis observed that Kalvos' syntax has mistakes although he did not offer specific examples. He also saw as a defect the pompous style of Kalvos but there are also positive traits that Kazantzakis found, such as an extraordinary poetic power and ambition in the development of the notion of freedom.<sup>175</sup>

### *Palamas*

Kazantzakis recognised the influence of the work of Palamas in Modern Greek literature but he viewed the quality of his poetry as uneven. Overall, his views about Palamas fluctuated in the course of time. When Kazantzakis published the first pieces

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<sup>171</sup> Kazantzakis 1909d: 164-168.

<sup>172</sup> Kazantzakis 1948.

<sup>173</sup> Kazantzakis 1948.

<sup>174</sup> Kazantzakis 1929: 5.

<sup>175</sup> Kazantzakis 1948.

of his work, Palamas had already been established as a leading poet in Greek letters. What is more, Palamas was one of the first intellectuals to hail the work of Kazantzakis.<sup>176</sup> In 1906 Palamas published a critical note in *Παναθήναια* about Kazantzakis' *Όφεις και Κρίνο*.<sup>177</sup> Kazantzakis' first comment about Palamas appeared in print three years later (1909) comparing the poetry of Palamas with Solomos. By that time, Palamas had published a series of essays on Solomos' work. Maraslis' edition of Solomos in 1901 included a prologue written by Palamas. In this prologue Palamas referred to the fragmentary character of Solomos' poems and compared it to an incomplete edifice. Palamas wrote:

Του Σολωμού [το έργο] δεν είναι τάχα σαν παραιτημένα θέμελα παλατιού που δε χτίστηκε; αλλ' από τον τρόπο που είναι χτισμένα τα θεμέλια κρίνομε για το παλάτι. [...] Μας φανερώνουν την ομορφιά όχι με πλατιά και με χτυπητά ανακράσματα, αλλά μ' εκείνα που βαθιά και σκεπαστά κρυφοψιθυρίζουν.<sup>178</sup>

In 1909 Kazantzakis employed the same imagery of an unfinished construction in order to comment on the fragmented poems of Solomos: “Μα εμείς κυτάζοντας τα κομμάτια θαμάζομε και λέμε: «Τι Παρθενώνα θάχτιζε!»”.<sup>179</sup> He then referred to the simplicity of Solomos' poems comparing them with the longer poetry of Palamas:

Ο Σολωμός φαίνεται μεγαλύτερος από τον Παλαμά ακριβώς γι' αυτό. Ο ένας ξεχύνεται, ρητορεύει, απλώνεται. Ο άλλος συμμαζεύεται, βαθυσυλλογάται, λιγομιλεί. Και το ν' αφήσει ακόμα ερείπια το έργο του και κομματιασμένο, μας τον ανεβάζει ακόμα πολύ ψηλά απ' ό,τι ίσως του αξίζει [...] Ενώ του Παλαμά η σκέψη είμαι βέβαιος πως πιο πλατειά είναι και πιο παγκόσμια και πιο πολύκαρπη. Όμως επειδή θέλησε (θέλησε; δε μπόρεσε αλλιώς), όλη να μας την εκφράσει, αναγκαστικά τη μίκρανε. Κι αναγκαστικά ό,τι πιο μεγάλο και πιο μουσικό έχει μέσα του ο Παλαμάς

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<sup>176</sup> See Kasinis 1986: 1295-1318.

<sup>177</sup> Palamas 1906: 281.

<sup>178</sup> Palamas 1970: 98-99.

<sup>179</sup> Kazantzakis 1909d: 126.

ποτέ του δε θα φανερωθεί. Κι ό,τι ο Σολωμός ίσως δεν είχε, με την υποβολή των λίγων ωραίων λέξεων μας έδωκε.<sup>180</sup>

In the decade of the 1920s Kazantzakis' interest in the poetry of Palamas subsided as his correspondence demonstrates. In a letter to Anemogiannis in 1926 Kazantzakis claimed that Palamas' work had declined and argued that there had not been a major poet in Greece since the appearance of Solomos.<sup>181</sup> In 1929 Kazantzakis referred to the contribution of Palamas to the cause of demoticism.<sup>182</sup> He noted the assimilation of the major contemporary ideological and philosophical movements in his work and his endeavour to formulate the Modern Greek tradition. In Kazantzakis' view, Palamas' short, lyric poems were higher in quality in comparison to his long ones for which he had been critically acclaimed. He viewed however the recent development of Palamas as disappointing due to what he saw as a conservative orientation.<sup>183</sup>

In 1943 Sikelianos composed a poem about Palamas' death and Kazantzakis wrote to him regarding it. Kazantzakis also noted in this letter that he is distant from Palamas' poetry apart from some lyric poems.<sup>184</sup> In 1948 Kazantzakis referred again to the poetry of Palamas in public characterising him as the dominant figure of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> and classifying him as the second national poet of Greece after Solomos. He emphasised the great influence of Palamas' work on Modern Greek literature and mentioned Drosinis, Gryparis, Malakasis and Mavilis as

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<sup>180</sup> Kazantzakis 1909d: 126-127.

<sup>181</sup> Kazantzakis 1979: 70-71

<sup>182</sup> Kazantzakis 1929: 5.

<sup>183</sup> Kazantzakis 1929: 5.

<sup>184</sup> Kazantzakis wrote to Sikelianos (1 October 1943): "I read your words on Palamas with emotion. You know how foreign this poet is to me except for a few of his lyric poems. He is a small major poet, whereas a Malakasis, in his very few excellent poems, is a large minor poet. No matter how much the rhythm of my blood is the opposite of Malakasis's, nevertheless I consider his best poem better than Palamas's best". Bien 2012: 586.

writers who were influenced by Palamas in their work.<sup>185</sup> Finally, a few years later (1953) when Kazantzakis had been critically acclaimed internationally as a novelist he characterised Palamas and Sikelianos as two poets who were standing out and were definitely major poets.<sup>186</sup>

### *Cavafy*

Kazantzakis acknowledged the impact of Cavafy's poetry on Greek letters but at the same time he criticised features of its content and style. In 1927 Kazantzakis visited Egypt and he met with Cavafy. His description of their meeting was published in the same year.<sup>187</sup> In his depiction of the Alexandrian poet Kazantzakis appeared to adopt a Cavafian diction and imagery. He saw Cavafy himself as bearing features of the characters of his poetry ("ειρωνεία", "φως των κεριών", "παρακμή και κούραση"). Kazantzakis observed a correspondence between the content and form of Cavafy's poetry. This congruence was detected, however, in characteristics which Kazantzakis described in negative terms. Cavafy's soul was given feminine and scornful features: "η πονηρή, όλο κοκεταρία, βαμμένη, στολισμένη γραία αμαρτωλή ψυχή του".<sup>188</sup> Cavafy's poetry was described as whimsical by Kazantzakis due to the combination of the demotic language with elements of katharevousa and also due to what he saw as unsophisticated rhyme and verse: "Ο εξωτερικά πρόχειρος μα σοφά μελετημένος στίχος του Καβάφη, η θεληματικά αλλοπρόσαλλη γλώσσα του, η απλοϊκή ρίμα του, είναι το μόνο σώμα που μπορούσε πιστά να περικαλύψει και να

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<sup>185</sup> Kazantzakis 1948.

<sup>186</sup> Kazantzakis 1953.

<sup>187</sup> Kazantzakis 1927a. Republished in Kazantzakis 1965: 78-83.

<sup>188</sup> Kazantzakis 1965: 78.

φανερώσει την ψυχή του”.<sup>189</sup> Kazantzakis described the poet as the last representative of an old world that does not offer seeds for something new to flourish: “Ο Καβάφης είναι από τα τελευταία άνθη ενός πολιτισμού. Με διπλά, ξεθωριασμένα φύλλα, με μικρό ασθενικό κοτσάνι, δίχως σπόρο”.<sup>190</sup> Like his characters he is depicted as passive during the last years of his life. Waiting for the end, he is described as seeing Alexandria from his window like Mark Antony in “Απολείπειν ο Θεός Αντώνιον”. The description of the meeting of Kazantzakis with Cavafy contains no specific information about ideological or artistic matters that they might have discussed.

According to Kazantzakis the passive, pessimistic and decadent world of Cavafy are characteristics of an old civilisation that does not reflect the dynamics of his time. The passive character of Cavafy seems to have nothing to offer to the active, full of life and vigorous youths that Kazantzakis meets after Cavafy.<sup>191</sup> Two years later (1929) Giorgos Theotokas would stress in the manifesto of the Generation of the Thirties, *Ελεύθερο Πνεύμα*, the need for a vivid, vigorous poetry and would characterise Cavafy’s poetry as an end (“Ο κ. Καβάφης είναι ένα τέλος [...]”).<sup>192</sup>

In the travel piece on Morea Kazantzakis referred to two young people who considered themselves disciples of Cavafy and Karyotakis.<sup>193</sup> Karyotakis and Cavafy were presented as stagnant poets (“τέλματα”) due to their pessimistic and passive stance. In 1928 upon hearing the news that Karyotakis committed suicide Kazantzakis linked his action with his poetic work and interpreted it as a correspondence to the ideas of his art. In a letter to Prevelakis on 18 August 1928, Kazantzakis observed that: “τα τραγούδια του τώρα παίρνουν μέγα βάθος, γιομώνουν ειλικρίνεια και

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<sup>189</sup> Kazantzakis 1965: 79.

<sup>190</sup> Kazantzakis 1965: 79.

<sup>191</sup> Kazantzakis 1965: 80-83.

<sup>192</sup> Theotokas 1998: 65. See Vitti 1984: 35-36.

<sup>193</sup> Kazantzakis 1965: 254.



συνέπεια”.<sup>194</sup> Kazantzakis appeared to disagree with “καρυωτακισμός” and he was not in favour of the pessimistic outlook that pervaded Karyotakis’ poetry. He acknowledged however the consistency between the life and work of Karyotakis. The coherence between the life and art had also been observed by Kazantzakis in the case of Cavafy in his travel piece of 1927.

In the late 1950s Kazantzakis will refer again to Cavafy in two interviews. His comments reflect his ambivalence about Cavafy. He characterised Cavafy as a mortal man who managed to become immortal through his work.<sup>195</sup> This poetic immortality that recognised in Cavafy is an important element in the thought of Kazantzakis who had encapsulated his goals in the phrase “come l’uom s’eterna” from Dante’s *Inferno* (XV 85).<sup>196</sup> The influence of Cavafy’s poetry on Modern Greek literature however was in retrospect seen unfavourably by Kazantzakis in 1957 because he deemed that a tired and decadent style was incongruous with “a new literature” like Modern Greek literature.<sup>197</sup>

### *Ethography*

Kazantzakis praised the language of Andreas Karkavitsas’ work which was the spoken language with rural elements. He viewed Karkavitsas as a great writer of fiction and distinguished his short stories and especially *Τα Λόγια της Πλώρης* as his finest works pointing out his dexterity in developing the theme of the sea: “Για κείνο ο Καρκαβίτσας είναι άφταστος, αληθινά μεγάλος στα Διηγήματά του και στα «Λόγια της Πλώρης» του, όπου τόσο θεϊκώς δημιουργικά φυσά «πνεύμα ζωής» στη θάλασσα,

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<sup>194</sup> Prevelakis 1984a: 92

<sup>195</sup> Gialourakis 1964: 21.

<sup>196</sup> E. Kazantzaki 1977: 76. Also see Prevelakis 1984a: 9.

<sup>197</sup> Evelpidis 1962: 192.

στα καράβια, στα φαντάσματα, στις τρικυμίες και στις ατόρνευτες κι απλοϊκές ψυχές των ναυτών”.<sup>198</sup> On the other hand Karkavitsas’ novel *O Αρχαιολόγος*, a *roman à thèse*, which was generally considered as a critical failure was presented by Kazantzakis as an aberration: “Κ’ είναι πάλι [ο Καρκαβίτσας] πολύ μετριότατος αλληγοριστής στον «Αρχαιολόγο» του, όπου ξεφεύγοντας πια από τη faculté maîtresse του, θέλει να σύρει το «χορό των ιδεών» και να υψώσει σε σύμβολα νεκρά και πολυφανερωμένα κι αναιμικά τους γεμάτους αίμα και ζωή ανθρώπους του”.<sup>199</sup>

Kazantzakis was especially interested in folkloric stories that developed the life, customs and dialect at the region of Crete. Kazantzakis was acquainted with Ioannis Kondylakis’ work which depicted the rural life at the countryside but was written in the linguistic form of katharevousa with the exception of *Η Πρώτη Αγάπη*. On the occasion of Kondylakis’ death in 1938 a brief comment of Kazantzakis on the fiction of Kondylakis was published in the journal *Κρητικές Σελίδες* in which Kazantzakis lauded Kondylakis as a person. However, he expressed dissatisfaction with Kondylakis’ work since according to Kazantzakis he did not manage to transfer all his talent in his work: “ένας τέτιος Κρητικός χάθηκε χωρίς ν’ αφήσει έργο αντάξιο με τη φλόγα και την περηφάνια του”.<sup>200</sup>

Another writer of ethnography that Kazantzakis valued was Georgios Marandis (1886-1967), who published folkloric short stories using the dialect of Eastern Crete. His literary work portrayed the everyday life, people and customs in the countryside of Crete. Marandis’ works that are found in Kazantzakis’ library are *Το Μιχελιό*, *Εμάθετέ τα; Εκλέψανε λέει το Γαρεφαλιό* (with dedication), *Το όνειρο του Σταυρούλη*

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<sup>198</sup> Kazantzakis 1909b: 51.

<sup>199</sup> Kazantzakis 1909b: 51.

<sup>200</sup> Kazantzakis 1938a: 247.

(with dedication).<sup>201</sup> Marandis had consciously placed his work in the tradition of Ioannis Kondylakis. In the prologue of *Κρητικές Αποσπερίδες* Marandis predicted that if an author in the future wants to write about Cretan life and types of people he will follow the path that Kondylakis paved and in 1919 Kondylakis extolled the first ethnography of Marandis, *Το Μιχελιό*, in a letter to him.<sup>202</sup> In comparing *Το Μιχελιό* with his own *Ο Πατούχας* Kondylakis found the first superior in many points: “Μου αρέσει χωρίς καμμίαν επιφύλαξιν. Εις πολλά σημεία το ευρίσκω ανώτερον του «Πατούχα» μου. Ο διάλογός του είναι φυσικώτερος και αληθινώτερος και το περιβάλλον πιστότερα αντιγραφμμένον. Εις αυτό βεβαίως σας εβοήθησεν η καλή χρήσις της Δημοτικής γλώσσης, την οποίαν τόσον καλά χειρίζεσθε!”.<sup>203</sup> Although Marandis’ work has fallen into obscurity today, it was acclaimed in his time.

Kazantzakis knew Marandis in person and in a letter to him he referred to the subject matter of his work and the depiction of Megalo Kastro in it. Kazantzakis said to Marandis on 30 December 1953: “Βουλιάζει, χάνεται το Κάστρο μας, επιπλέει πια μονάχα στη μνήμη πολύ λίγων ανθρώπων. Κ’ έχουμε όλοι χρέος να γράψουμε ό,τι θυμούμαστε, να σώσουμε ό,τι μπορούμε [...] Εσύ έκαμες και κάνεις το χρέος σου στο Κάστρο με τα γραφτά σου [...] Στον *Καπετάν Μιχάλη* έκαμα κ’ εγώ, ό,τι μπορούσα, ανακατέβοντας αλήθεια και ψευτιές και βάζοντας ξόμπλια”.<sup>204</sup> *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* was also set in Kastro, the modern Heraklion, and as we will examine in the relevant chapter Kazantzakis’ novel bears intertextual connections with Marandis’ work.

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<sup>201</sup> Detorakis and Katsalaki 1997: 61. Also see Prevelakis 1984a: 149.

<sup>202</sup> Marandis 2012.

<sup>203</sup> Marandis 2012.

<sup>204</sup> E. Alexiou 1981: 174-175.

One of the first critical reviews that Kazantzakis published was about *Ridi Pagliaccio* by the novelist and dramatist Galateia Kazantzaki, who was his first wife.<sup>205</sup> According to Kazantzakis, the characteristic feature of her writing was the criticism of the flaws of the society and he praised the sarcastic and revolutionary style of her work. The distinguishing characteristics that he observed in her novella were honesty, irony and disillusionment. Overall, he considered her a major writer although he found flaws in her style.<sup>206</sup> In 1929 he even placed her fiction at the top of Modern Greek literature (“occupe le sommet de la jeune littérature néo-hellénique”).<sup>207</sup> A year later (1930) he wrote to Prevelakis that his friend and editor Lachanas had sent him recently published books and he read the collected prose of Palamas, Giorgos Theotokas’ *Ελεύθερο Πνεύμα*, Varnalis’ *Σκλάβοι Πολιορκημένοι* and Galateia’s collection of short stories entitled *11 π.μ.-1 μ.μ.*, that he considered the best among them.<sup>208</sup> Kazantzakis preferred her works *Ridi Pagliaccio*, *Η Απώστη Πολιτεία*,<sup>209</sup> and *11 π.μ.-1 μ.μ.*<sup>210</sup> Galateia’s *Άνθρωποι και Υπεράνθρωποι* that was published in 1957 seems to express her outlook on Kazantzakis’ life and work as the character named Alexandros bears correspondences with Kazantzakis. Kazantzakis did not criticise it in public and we do not know if he read it but he wrote in a letter to Lefteris Alexiou that this book would nourish the myth of his life.<sup>211</sup> At that time

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<sup>205</sup> Kazantzakis 1909a: 1-3.

<sup>206</sup> See Prevelakis 1984a: 176.

<sup>207</sup> Kazantzakis 1929: 5.

<sup>208</sup> Prevelakis 1984a: 185.

<sup>209</sup> Their letters show that Kazantzakis made efforts to have Galateia’s novella translated to German by Dieterich but Galateia did not respond to his endeavours. Kazantzakis 1958a: 64, 95.

<sup>210</sup> See Prevelakis 1984a: 185.

<sup>211</sup> See the letter to Lefteris Alexiou in Bien 2012: 832-833.

Kazantzakis was himself writing *Αναφορά στον Γκρέκο*, a novel which was based on autobiographical material about his life and art and was published posthumously.

### *Theotokis, Voutiras and Varnalis*

Kazantzakis held in high esteem the literary works where contemporary matters were developed. He considered Konstandinos Theotokis as a writer of great value and observed that he had been very influential although he did not specify which writers had been influenced by Theotokis' work.<sup>212</sup> He noted however that his work had fallen into obscurity. Kazantzakis had also referred to the work of Dimosthenis Voutiras and distinguished in particular the contemporary issues that were treated in his fiction.<sup>213</sup> Moreover, Kazantzakis presented a critical evaluation of Voutiras in comparison to Papdiamandis: "Le style de ses écrits est négligé, la langue extrêmement pauvre, mais ses défauts vont de pair avec une force d'imagination exceptionnelle et une humanité ardente, profonde. Voutiras est loin de l'art pur de Papdiamantis, mais ses nouvelles sont puissantes par ailleurs: en elles, retentit le cri de l'homme contemporain".<sup>214</sup> In literary criticism the work of Voutiras was often compared to that of Papdiamandis.<sup>215</sup> Here Kazantzakis also compares their work and points out that Voutiras' work has a contemporary character but is distant from the "pure art" of Papdiamandis.

Varnalis' work was also praised by Kazantzakis due to its contemporary orientation. Kazantzakis referred to the treatment of religious and social matters in the poetry of Varnalis. In 1929 Kazantzakis states: "Un des plus intéressants représentants

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<sup>212</sup> Evelpidis 1962: 192.

<sup>213</sup> Kazantzakis 1929: 5.

<sup>214</sup> Kazantzakis 1929: 5.

<sup>215</sup> Beaton 1999: 108.

de cette tendance en Grèce est Kostas Varnalis. Ses vers sont les plus vigoureuses satires dirigées contre les idoles surannées de la société contemporaine: religion, patriotisme, beautés et vertus bourgeoises”.<sup>216</sup> In Kazantzakis’ view the distinctive feature of Varnalis’ poetry was the satire upon institutions of the contemporary society such as religion and patriotism. In his interviews in the 1950s he also expressed his appreciation for the poetry of Varnalis (“Ο Βάρναλης γράφει καλά και θα μπορούσε βέβαια να δώσει μεγάλα πράγματα, αν έκανε κάποιες θυσίες”, “Εκτιμώ ιδιαίτερα την ποίηση του Βάρναλη”).<sup>217</sup> Overall, Kazantzakis considered Varnalis as an interesting poet and he characterised him as a remarkable talent.<sup>218</sup>

### *Sikelianos*

Kazantzakis met Angelos Sikelianos in 1914 at the Educational Society and in the same year they travelled on Mount Athos. Their meeting and journey was described by Kazantzakis in *Αναφορά στον Γκρέκο*.<sup>219</sup> Sikelianos’ Delphic Festivals in 1927 and 1930 during the years of their estrangement were viewed by Kazantzakis as an abandonment of his poetic work.<sup>220</sup> In 1946 both Sikelianos and Kazantzakis were candidates for the Nobel Prize for literature.<sup>221</sup> According to Prevelakis, Kazantzakis also wanted to write a book about Sikelianos after his death in 1951.<sup>222</sup> Kazantzakis emphasised the contribution of Sikelianos to the cultivation of the demotic language in his poetry. In 1954 he dedicated the translation of Dante’s *Divine Comedy* to him,

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<sup>216</sup> Kazantzakis 1929: 5.

<sup>217</sup> Gialourakis 1964: 30. Evelpidis 1962: 192.

<sup>218</sup> Kazantzakis 1947.

<sup>219</sup> Kazantzakis 1962b: 226-281.

<sup>220</sup> Prevelakis 1984b: 162-163.

<sup>221</sup> Prevelakis 1984a: 388-389.

<sup>222</sup> Prevelakis 1984b: 207-208.

“il miglior fabbro del parlar materno”.<sup>223</sup> In a 1957 interview Kazantzakis stated: “Μελέτησα τη γλώσσα του λαού και προσπάθησα να πάρω από αυτήν όσες λέξεις κ’ εκφράσεις πρέπει, κατά τη γνώμη μου, να μουν και στο γραπτό μας λόγο. Νομίζω πως η γλώσσα μου θα είναι αύριο η γλώσσα των σχολικών βιβλίων. Βέβαια στη διαμόρφωση της δημοτικής εργάστηκαν κι άλλοι λογοτέχνες και ιδιαίτερα μεγάλη υπήρξε η συμβολή του Βαλαωρίτη και του Σικελιανού”.<sup>224</sup> He also referred to Sikelianos as a major poet and he observed a lack of poets at the time: “Ο δικός μας ο ποιητής, ο Σικελιανός, ήτανε μεγάλος. [...] Σήμερα υπάρχουν ποιήματα, ποιητές δεν υπάρχουν”.<sup>225</sup> In 1957 he characterised Sikelianos as well as Joan Ramón Jiménez who was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature in 1956 as the best poets of the century: “Ο Σικελιανός μαζί με τον Ισπανό Χουάν Χιμένεθ είναι οι μεγαλύτεροι ποιητές του αιώνα μας”.<sup>226</sup>

### *The Aeolian School*

Kazantzakis referred to the Asia Minor Catastrophe as a crucial turning point for Modern Greek history. He observed that with the literary output of the Greeks from Asia Minor, Modern Greek literature acquired nostalgia for the lost homeland.<sup>227</sup> He recognised Stratis Myrivilis as one of the best writers of fiction in Modern Greek literature (“Un de nos meilleurs prosateurs. Il connaît très bien la langue, son style est viril, ses expressions très riches et très exactes”).<sup>228</sup> In a letter sent to Prevelakis on 28 August 1934 Kazantzakis mentioned that he had just met Myrivilis and Venezis for

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<sup>223</sup> Prevelakis 1984b: 207.

<sup>224</sup> Evelpidis 1962: 192.

<sup>225</sup> Gialourakis 1964: 30.

<sup>226</sup> Evelpidis 1962: 192.

<sup>227</sup> Kazantzakis 1948.

<sup>228</sup> Kazantzakis 1947.

the first time.<sup>229</sup> Two years later (1936) Myrivilis publicly defended Kazantzakis against allegations that his work did not have a social goal.<sup>230</sup> In 1945 the journal *Καλλιτεχνική Ελλάδα*, whose editor was Myrivilis, published the first part of Kazantzakis' tragedy *Προμηθέας* (pages 6-24). In August 1954 Kazantzakis stated in an interview: "Θα πεις, τι σ' ενδιαφέρει στον Μυριβήλη; Η γλώσσα! Είναι μάστορης. Πρέπει και να μεταφραστεί. Αξίζει".<sup>231</sup> In August 1957 he added: "Από τα σύγχρονα έργα μεγάλη εντύπωση μου έκανε «Η παναγιά η Γοργόνα» του Μυριβήλη. Είναι μεγάλος συγγραφέας και συστήνω σ' όλους μου τους ξένους εκδότες να μεταφράσουν το έργο του".<sup>232</sup> The traits of Myrivilis' works according to Kazantzakis were the language, the style and the richness of the narrative expressions.<sup>233</sup>

Photis Kondoglou was viewed by Kazantzakis as an author who writes in a strong and vivid language. He referred to his interest in Christianity and Byzantine history, art, literature and religion as well as his interest in his native land, Asia Minor.<sup>234</sup> In his travel piece on Morea, Kondoglou along with Gemistos Plethon and Theodoros Kolokotronis are presented by Kazantzakis as exemplary personalities who were able to define themselves in the historical moment when they lived.<sup>235</sup> Kazantzakis was familiar with the work of another major writer of the Aeolian School, Ilias Venezis, but he claimed that their perspectives on literature were different. He explained that whereas Venezis appreciated the aesthetic value of a literary product, Kazantzakis evaluated the creation of ideas.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Prevelakis 1984a: 433.

<sup>230</sup> See Bien 1989: 275.

<sup>231</sup> Gialourakis 1964: 29.

<sup>232</sup> Evelpidis 1962: 192.

<sup>233</sup> Kazantzakis 1947.

<sup>234</sup> Kazantzakis 1947.

<sup>235</sup> See Karalis 1994: 131-150.

<sup>236</sup> Evelpidis 1962: 192.



## *The Generation of the Thirties*

Kazantzakis argued that there were numerous talented authors among the writers of the Generation of the Thirties but there were no poets or novelists standing out in the way that Sikelianos and Palamas did. This was claimed by Kazantzakis on 3 December 1953 in an interview that was published in the journal *Αθηναϊκή*.<sup>237</sup> The authors whose literary talent Kazantzakis mentioned in that interview were Odysseas Elytis,<sup>238</sup> I. M. Panagiotopoulos, Giorgos Theotokas, Angelos Terzakis and Prevelakis.

Seferis, as becomes clear from letters, is seen by Kazantzakis as part of a “clique” together with Katsibalis and Dimaras.<sup>239</sup> Seferis was characterised by Kazantzakis in 1947 as an “interesting” poet of the time.<sup>240</sup> By 1947 Seferis had published his most well-known poetical works such as *Μυθιστόρημα* and *Κίχλη*. Kazantzakis viewed a cerebral character in Seferis’ poetry which rendered it learned and refined. He also referred to Seferis as a *démodé* poet (“un peu vieillote”) and as a minor poet (“poétique mince mais pure”, “Poeta minor, faible, sensible et sympathique”).<sup>241</sup> He did not acknowledge, however, any originality in the work of Seferis and he classified him as a disciple of T. S. Eliot. In an interview with

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<sup>237</sup> Kazantzakis 1953.

<sup>238</sup> Minas Dimakis reported that Kazantzakis had met with Elytis: “Μιαν άλλη Κυριακή είμαστε στο σπίτι του κ. Αλέκου Μπενάκη και ανάμεσα στους προσκεκλημένους ήταν και ο Οδυσσέας Ελύτης. Θυμάμαι τον Καζαντζάκη που επανέλαβε δυο-τρεις φορές στον Ελύτη: «να μην ξεχνάς πως είσαι Κρητικός». Είναι γνωστό πως ο Ελύτης γεννήθηκε στο Ηράκλειο της Κρήτης κ’ εκεί πέρασε τα παιδικά του χρόνια, κατάγεται όμως από τη Μυτιλήνη. Αναμνήσεις από το Ηράκλειο, τοπωνύμια και λοιπά, βρίσκεις στο «Άξιον Εστί» του λαμπρού αυτού ποιητή”. Dimakis 1975: 63. For a discussion of parallel elements between Kazantzakis’ work and that of Elytis, see Saltapidas 1993: 36-45. Also see Giatromanolakis 2011: 11-14. For the connection of Ebeirikos and Elytis with Kazantzakis’ work see Kalokyris 2011: 152-158.

<sup>239</sup> See the letter of Kazantzakis to Knös in E. Kazantzaki 1977: 580 and Bien 2012: 715-716. Also see Kazantzakis’ letter to Kastanakis in Bien 2012: 650.

<sup>240</sup> Kazantzakis 1947.

<sup>241</sup> Kazantzakis 1947.

Pouskouri in 1952 Kazantzakis also noted the connection of Seferis' poetry with that of Eliot ("ο Σεφέρης, άνθρωπος μορφωμένος και καλλιεργημένος, θυμίζει όμως Έλιοτ").<sup>242</sup> Kazantzakis made a similar comment in an interview in 1956 in Slovenia: "Μιλώντας για την σύγχρονη Ελληνική λογοτεχνία διέκοψε ξαφνα την κουβέντα μας και άρχισε να μιλάει με την γυναίκα του Ελληνικά και η συζήτηση αυτή είχε αρχίσει κιόλας να δυναμώνει όταν ο Καζαντζάκης απευθύνθηκε σε μένα λέγοντας: «Η γυναίκα μου θέλει οπωσδήποτε να αναφέρω και τον Σεφέρη, εγώ όμως δεν τον αγαπώ γιατί δεν είναι καθόλου Έλληνας επειδή γράφει ποιήματα όπως ο Έλλιοτ [sic]".<sup>243</sup> In the few references to Seferis' poetry Kazantzakis chose to emphasise the influence of Eliot on it, which has been observed by numerous critics of his work.

Theotokas was considered by Kazantzakis as a talented essayist ("Τα δοκίμια του Θεοτοκά είναι ανώτερα από τα περισσότερα σύγχρονα γαλλικά").<sup>244</sup> In 1947 he had characterised him as a cultivated writer who had an average talent ("talent médiocre", "dessous de la médiocrité. Aurea mediocritas") and grouped together with Theotokas other writers such as Terzakis, P. Charis, Xefloudas, Petsalis and Athanasiadis.<sup>245</sup> Later (1954) he stated in an interview that he paid special attention to Terzakis' historical novel *Η Πριγκιπέσσα Ιζαμπώ* but criticised the lack of analogies or parallels with the present. Kazantzakis considered a historical novel successful as long as it did not treat subjects merely of the past but also reflected present matters. Kazantzakis also referred to Petsalis' historical novel *Οι Μαυρόλυκοι*. The novel which has the subtitle "the chronicle of the occupation of Greece by the Turks 1565-1799" follows the history of the family of Mavrolikoi during those years. Although

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<sup>242</sup> Pouskouri 1952: 1389.

<sup>243</sup> Kazantzakis 1956.

<sup>244</sup> Evelpidis 1962: 192.

<sup>245</sup> Kazantzakis 1947.

Kazantzakis considered the choice of theme successful he observed that the unfolding of the plot would need more than the two volumes which were published to be developed: “Ο Πετσάλης είχε σημαντική επιτυχία στους «Μαυρόλγκους». Όμως το θέμα που είναι επιτυγέστατο είναι πολύ βαρύ και ήθελε περισσότερους τόμους”.<sup>246</sup> Karagatsis is valued by Kazantzakis for his narrative technique and the treatment of his topics. However, Kazantzakis viewed the style of Karagatsis’ language as artificial and his adherence to Freud as obsessive.<sup>247</sup> Thrasos Kastanakis had a good knowledge of the Greek language, as Kazantzakis argued, and his style was vivid and humorous. Kazantzakis observed the cosmopolitan character of Kastanakis’ writing and also his profound knowledge of what he called “Homo Hellenicus” (“d’ une connaissance profonde de Homo Hellenicus”).<sup>248</sup>

Kosmas Politis’ work was praised by Kazantzakis for its content and style. The novel *To Γυρί* (1945) is found in Kazantzakis’ library with the dedication “Ενθύμιο στον κ. Ν. Καζαντζάκη. Κ. Πολίτης”. In 1946 Kazantzakis delivered a speech on the poetry of Paul Eluard as the president of the Society of Greek Writers (Εταιρία Ελλήνων Λογοτεχνών) and Kosmas Politis was a member of the society that organised that event.<sup>249</sup> Moreover, Kosmas Politis was a member of the committee of the society of Greek writers that in 1946 nominated Kazantzakis for first time as a candidate for the Nobel Prize of Literature.<sup>250</sup> In 1947 Kazantzakis stressed the narrative power and the advanced ideas in Kosmas Politis’ fiction, something that

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<sup>246</sup> Kazantzakis 1953.

<sup>247</sup> Kazantzakis 1947.

<sup>248</sup> Kazantzakis 1947.

<sup>249</sup> See E. Alexiou 1981: 241.

<sup>250</sup> See E. Alexiou 1981: 246-247.

renders his novels dense in meaning. He did not comment upon an individual work but on the whole he characterised Kosmas Politis' novels as remarkable.<sup>251</sup>

It is well-known that Prevelakis was a writer who was Kazantzakis' friend, collaborator and confidant. Their correspondence from 1926 until 1957 was published by Prevelakis in 1965.<sup>252</sup> Kazantzakis considered Prevelakis as one of the best writers of the younger generation,<sup>253</sup> and viewed him as a valid continuator of Zacharias Papandoniou.<sup>254</sup> Kazantzakis' evaluations about Prevelakis' work were rarely expressed in public and he conveyed his opinion about it directly to him. In the letters of Kazantzakis to Prevelakis he commented on most of Prevelakis' works such as *To Χρονικό μιας Πολιτείας*, *Παντέρμη Κρήτη*, *Ο Κρητικός*, and *Ο Γκρέκο στη Ρώμη*. Kazantzakis expressed his opinion to Prevelakis during the production of the works, when he sent them to Kazantzakis after their publication or when Prevelakis was reading his works to him. In Kazantzakis' comments we most often find remarks about the language, the style, the themes and narrative of Prevelakis' novels. In an interview in 1957 he characterised Prevelakis as a remarkable writer and advised Prevelakis to express his perceptions on contemporary issues and communicate more with his readers.<sup>255</sup>

### *Conclusions*

It has been argued in this chapter that Kazantzakis engaged in a scrupulous reading of Modern Greek literature. He was avidly reading Modern Greek literary

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<sup>251</sup> Kazantzakis 1947.

<sup>252</sup> For an exploration of the relationship of the two authors see Decavalles 1985: 103-143.

<sup>253</sup> Kazantzakis 1947.

<sup>254</sup> Evelpidis 1962: 192.

<sup>255</sup> Gialourakis 1964: 29.

works and he was seeking access to them even when he was temporarily or permanently leaving outside of Greece. From the early 1940s onwards he was acquainted with the literary tradition of Modern Greece and he was also following the literary production of the established poets and novelists of his time. Moreover, he was reading selectively the works of the younger poets and novelists. The criteria that Kazantzakis exerted in his literary evaluations concerned the language, the style and the theme of the work. He noted especially the connections of the work with the present and how it expressed contemporary matters and ideas.

Kazantzakis' critical comments did not have the breadth and impact of Palamas' essays or the popularity that Thetotokas', Seferis' or Elytis' essays saw. The exploration of Kazantzakis' activity as a reader and the examination of his critical evaluations show that he was acquainted with the Modern Greek literary tradition and also with the literary criticism of the time. He was familiar with the critical discussions as he often raised matters in his comments that appeared in contemporary criticism. He was also aware of the critically acclaimed Modern Greek works. This phase since the early 1940s coincided with the writing of his major novels and therefore we can be confident that when he was writing them he had a substantial knowledge of Modern Greek literature. The fruits of his engagement with Modern Greek literature as a reader are found in the literary work that he produced whose intertextual relationship with the Modern Greek literary tradition is analysed in the chapters that follow.

## 2. The integration of folk and literary tradition in *The Life and Times of Alexis Zorbas*

In *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* the folk tradition and the literary tradition of Modern Greece are interwoven. A juxtaposition of works with folk and literary features permeates the novel as it is intertextually linked with the Greek cultural tradition. In terms of content the novel explores the dipoles of the folk and the individual, the oral and the written, the high and the low. The examination of the intertextual techniques that link the novel with works that belong to the folk and the literary tradition is the subject matter of the current chapter which is divided into two sections. First, the connection with folk tradition is analysed through parallel readings with folk poetry. Second, the association with Modern Greek literature from Palamas' work, to Myrivilis' novella *Ο Βασίλης ο Αρβανίτης* and Kosmas Politis' novel *Λεμονοδάσος* is explored. *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* is the only novel examined in this thesis whose narrator is not a third-person omniscient narrator but a character who participated in the episodes. This investigation aims to demonstrate that the narration is joined with the exploration of the components of the Greek cultural tradition.

### 2.1. THE FOLK TRADITION

#### *Greek folk songs*

The narrator is the character who writes retrospectively the events that he experienced with Zorbas. This is stated explicitly in the prologue of the novel: “Κι

έτσι ο Ζορμπάς, ο γεμάτος σάρκα και κόκαλα, κατάντησε στα χέρια μου μελάνι και χαρτί”.<sup>256</sup> Zorbas commits nothing much to paper and his words are presented as a cry which inevitably bears an oral character: “Αν άκουγα τη φωνή του -όχι τη φωνή, την κραυγή του”.<sup>257</sup> Zorbas also sings *μαντινάδες*:

-Ένα κρητικό, της πατρίδας σου! έκαμε ο Ζορμπάς· θα σου τραγουδήσω μια μαντινάδα που μου την έμαθαν στο Κάστρο· από τη μέρα που την έμαθα, άλλαξε η ζωή μου. Σκέφτηκε λίγο: -Όχι, δεν άλλαξε, είπε· μα τώρα καταλαβαίνω πως είχα δίκιο. Άπλωσε τα χοντροδάχτυλά του στο σαντούρι, σήκωσε το λαιμό. Η φωνή του, άγρια, βραχνή, όλο ντέρτι, τρικούμισε τον αγέρα:

*Σαν τη λογιάσεις μια δουλειά, όρτσα και μη φοβάσαι·*

*αμόλα τη τη νιότη σου και μην τηνε λυπάσαι!*<sup>258</sup>

While Zorbas is singing *μαντινάδες* the workers are dancing and the narrator is watching them speechless (“Κι εγώ τους κοίταζα συνεπαρμένος, αμίλητος, και συλλογιόμουν”).<sup>259</sup> The oral and folk cultural elements with which Zorbas is linked are transmitted in the written text that the narrator produced afterwards, namely the novel.

The protagonist of the novel, Alexis Zorbas, is presented as a brave character of the people. His words and actions are reminiscent of the heroes of the folk tradition and folk poetry. The novel has a multifaceted connection with folkloric elements and the narration also includes proverbs.<sup>260</sup> The Greek folk songs, which were in their majority composed by anonymous creators, were transmitted orally whereas the literary tradition was a written one. An integral characteristic of the folk songs is their

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<sup>256</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 8-9.

<sup>257</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 9.

<sup>258</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 189. For a study on the aspects of the Cretan culture that are present in the work of Kazantzakis see Kapsomenos 2010b: 403-434.

<sup>259</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 190.

<sup>260</sup> For the folk elements in Kazantzakis' novels see Philippides 1997: 209-230. The proverbs in the novel are analysed in Doulaveras 1991.

oral character, an element with which Zorbas is associated. The relation of the oral and the written element as well as the folk and the literary are reflected in the mingling of the folk and the literary tradition in the novel.

Moreover, although the narration belongs to a prose text, which in fact is the first of the major novels that Kazantzakis wrote in his mature period, it is interwoven with features from the folk poetry. It might be said that this project enabled Kazantzakis to render the novel as a fulfillment of the aesthetic ambitions that he had earlier as a poet. The intertextual poetics in terms of the juxtaposition of prose and poetry seem to be reflected in the following description of the Cretan landscape where the story takes place:

Έμοιαζε το κρητικό ετούτο τοπίο, έτσι μου φάνηκε, με την καλή πρόζα: καλοδοουλεμένο, λιγόλογο, λυτρωμένο από περιττά πλούτη, δυνατό και συγκρατημένο. Διατύπωνε με τ' απλούστερα μέσα την ουσία. [...] Μα ανάμεσα από τις αυστηρές γραμμές του ξεχώριζες στο κρητικό ετούτο τοπίο απροσδόκητη ευαισθησία και τρυφεράδα –σε απάνεμες γούβες μοσκοβολούσαν οι λεμονιές κι οι πορτοκαλιές, και πέρα, από την απέραντη θάλασσα, ξεχύνονταν αστέρευτη ποίηση.<sup>261</sup>

The narration of the novel is permeated by references, quotations and allusions to folk poetry. The characters and the narrator explicitly refer to folk songs, they quote segments from folk songs and they engage in actions that connect them with characters from folk songs.

Zorbas from his very first appearance in the novel as he introduces himself to the narrator mentions his skill in singing *κλέφτικα* (“τραγουδώ κιόλα κάτι παλιούς κλέφτικους σκοπούς, μακεδονίτικους”).<sup>262</sup> Zorbas seems to augment the traditional world of the *κλέφτικα*. The choice of this category of folk poetry (*κλέφτικα*) is

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<sup>261</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 43.

<sup>262</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 23.



appropriate as the gist of these folk songs suits the worldview and character of Zorbas. These songs encapsulate a fearless attitude and a free spirit that are the most significant characteristics of Zorbas. Although the *κλέφτες* did not adhere to a national ideology they defended the Greeks by fighting against the Turks and hence their deeds were sung by the Greek people.<sup>263</sup> Alexis Politis writes: “Ό,τι τραγουδιέται στα κλέφτικα είναι η ατομικά ευψυχία· δεν θα βρούμε πουθενά ούτε εθνική ούτε κοινωνική συνείδηση. Αυτό που είδε ή που θέλησε να ιδή ο τραγουδιστής στον ήρωά του είναι η ελεύθερη ψυχή, που ξεπερνάει όλα τα εμπόδια, απ’ όπου κι αν ξεπροβάλλουν”.<sup>264</sup> The attitude of *κλέφτες* is analogous to that of Zorbas, who participated in Greek wars without being restricted by a nationalistic ideology and thus retaining his individual freedom. Moreover, the noun *ζορμπάς* was used by the Turks in order to refer to *κλέφτες*.<sup>265</sup> The association of Zorbas with *κλέφτικα* at the beginning of the novel reflects his character and ideology.

Zorbas quotes a *κλέφτικο* entitled “Το λαγιαρνί” in the narration of his wedding with Nousa. Zorbas says:

Βγήκαν κλέφτες στα βουνά

για να κλέψουν άλογα!

Κι άλογα δε βρήκανε

Και τη Νούσα πήρανε!<sup>266</sup>

When Zorbas quotes the verses of the song he changes them and Nousa takes the place of the sheep that are stolen. Instead of *προβατάκια πήρανε* Zorbas says *και*

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<sup>263</sup> See A. Politis 1976: λε’.

<sup>264</sup> A. Politis 1976: να’.

<sup>265</sup> According to Alexis Politis: “Σ’ όλη τη διάρκεια της Τουρκοκρατίας, οι κλέφτες, που ονομάζονταν επίσης χαραμήδες και από του Τούρκους ζορμπάδες, αποτελούσαν έναν μόνιμο παράγοντα αταξίας και ανησυχίας”. A. Politis 1976: ιβ’.

<sup>266</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 98.

τη Νούσα πήρανε. He states explicitly that he has changed the verses of the folk song as he says to the narrator: “βλέπεις, αφεντικό, το άλλαξα και λίγο, για την περίσταση”.<sup>267</sup> Zorbas quotes the song with alterations that adapt it to the specific occasion. The ending of the story shows that the substitution of Nousa for the sheep that are stolen by the *κλέφτες* in the folk song anticipates her own abduction afterwards as she is taken from Zorbas by a soldier who happens to pass by the village.

In other instances ideas and values that are included in *ριζίτικα* are detected in the words of the narrator. For example, the following *ριζίτικο* develops the idea of the openness of the brave man to philoxenia:

Τον ανθρωμένο μην τον κλαις όντεν κι’ αν αστοχήση.  
Μ’ αν αστοχήση μια και δυο παλ’ ανθρωμένος είνε,  
Πάντα ’ν’ η πόρταν ’τ’ ανοιχτή κ’ η τάβλαν του στρωμένη  
Και τ’ αργυρόν του το σκαμνί όμορφα στολισμένο,  
Χαροκοπούν οι φίλοιν του κάθουνται τρων και πίνουν.<sup>268</sup>

In the episode where he tries to prevent Manolakas from fighting with Zorbas, the narrator reminds him the moral values of philoxenia since Zorbas is not Cretan. Just like in the folk song, the narrator stresses that it does not matter that Manolakas did not show his bravery since everyone knows that he is brave. He then invites him to eat and drink together with Zorbas and refers to their friendship in a narration that evokes the *ριζίτικο*:

Δεν ντροπιάζεσαι εσύ εύκολα, καπετάν Μανόλακα! είπα. Όλο το χωριό έχει να κάμει με την παλικάριά σου μην κοιτάξεις τι γίνηκε προχτές στην εκκλησιά ήταν κακή

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<sup>267</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 98.

<sup>268</sup> Jeannarakis 1876: 157, nr 177.

ώρα, ό,τι έγινε έγινε, πάει! Κι ύστερα μην το ξεχνάς, ο Ζορμπάς είναι ξένος, Μακεδόνας, κι είναι μεγάλη ντροπή, εμείς οι Κρητικοί, να σηκώνουμε χέρι σ' ένα ξενομερίτη που 'ρθε στον τόπο μας... Έλα, δώσε το χέρι, αυτό θα πει παλικαριά, κι έλα, πάμε στην παράγκα να πιούμε ένα κρασί, να ψήσουμε μίαν πήχη λουκάνικο μεζέ, να στερεώσει, καπετάν Μανόλακα, ο φιλιωμός!<sup>269</sup>

There are topics of stories that Zorbas narrates from his past which had been developed in the folk tradition. The story that Zorbas recounts to the narrator regarding the fixation of an old woman with her appearance and his reaction against her alludes to Cretan *ριζίτικα*. More specifically, Zorbas says: “Κάθε Σάββατο λοιπόν η γριά τραβούσε το μεντέρι της στο παραθύρι, έπαιρνε κρυφά το καθρεφτάκι, και δώστου χτένιζε όσα μαλλιά της είχαν απομείνει και τα 'κανε χωρίστρα. [...] «Τι μου τρίβεις με καρυδόφυλλο τα χείλια κάθε Σάββατο και μου κάνεις χωρίστρα; Θα αρρείς για σένα κάνουμε καντάδα; Εμείς την Κρουστάλλω θέμε' εσύ μυρίζεις λιβάνι!» [...] Μαράζωσε, κι ύστερα από δυο μήνες έπεσε του θανατά’”.<sup>270</sup> Key-words such as *γριά*, and *χωρίστρα* are markers that link Zorbas' narrative with the following *ριζίτικο*:

Θε μου και έπαρέ τηνε τούτην τη γρα 'π' ομπρός μου.

Κι' ο θιός και μ' ελυπήθηκε κ' είδε τον τόσο φόβο

Και μου 'στείλε το Χάροντα, κ' έφταξε το ντελόγκο.

Κ' η γράδες ως τ' ακούσανε επιάσαν τση καρφίχταις

Μπαίνουν λουγοχτενίζονται και σιάζουν τση χωρίστραις.

Κι' ο Χάροντας επέρασε 'ς τ' άλογο καβαλάρης.<sup>271</sup>

The theme of death is recurrent in Greek folk songs and especially in the broad category of laments (*μοιρολόγια*). Zorbas makes references to the *μοιρολόγια* after the

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<sup>269</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 259.

<sup>270</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 58-59.

<sup>271</sup> Jeannarakis 1876: 186-187, nr 250.

death of the widow and expresses his intention to sing one for her.<sup>272</sup> In this episode he also discusses with the narrator about the death of his young child. The ideas that he expresses are associated with concepts expressed in *μοιρολόγια*. The notion of God's injustice regarding the death of a young person is found in *ριζίτικα*:

Θε μου μεγαλοδύναμε, άδικο που τα κάνεις.

Παίρνεις τσι νιούς, παίρνεις τσι νιές κι αφήνεις τσι γερόντους.

Μα δεν μπορείς το Χάροντα, Θε μου, να τόνε πάρης,

να μην υπάρχει θάνατος μούδε και Κάτω κόσμος.<sup>273</sup>

Zorbas develops the same theme stressing also the aspect of injustice and repeating the word *άδικο* that is present in the folk song: “-Σου λέω, αφεντικό, όλα ετούτα που γίνονται εδώ στον κόσμο, άδικο, άδικο, άδικο! Δεν υπογράφω εγώ, εγώ το σκουληκάκι, εγώ ο γυμνοσάλιαγκας, ο Ζορμπάς! Γιατί να πεθαίνουν οι νέοι κι οι νέες και να 'πομένουν τα σαράβαλα; [...] δε θα το συχωρέσω στο Θεό!”<sup>274</sup> Moreover, he expresses his ideas in direct questions, namely in a form that is also found in the above folk song.

Previously, Zorbas performed a heroic action as he tried to save the widow from Mavrandonis who wanted to kill her because he blamed her for the death of his son who committed suicide due to his unrequited love for her. In the description of this scene the narration is permeated with components of the folk tradition. In Mavrandonis' fight with Zorbas the first is described with the characteristics that Charos has in the vernacular tradition. A brave and heroic lad is conventionally described as engaging in a supernatural fight against Charos where the latter

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<sup>272</sup> Zorbas says: “ε μωρή, χήρα και μου 'ρχεται να σύρω μοιρολόι, θα σκάσω!”. Kazantzakis 2010a: 255.

<sup>273</sup> Detorakis 1976: 168, nr 158.

<sup>274</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 254. On the connection of this passage with the Greek cultural tradition also see Kapsomenos 2010a: 347-348.

eventually and inevitably prevails. This story pattern is best exemplified by the combat of Digenis and Charos. The fighting scene of Zorbas and Mavrandonis begins with a shepherd who is dancing and makes a toast referring to Charos: “βάρα που να πεθάνει ο Χάρος”.<sup>275</sup> Death is presented here as identical with life in the characteristic manner of Kazantzakis of merging the opposites in a synthesis: “Ο Χάρος πέθαινε κάθε στιγμή, ξαναγεννιόταν κάθε στιγμή, σαν τη ζωή”.<sup>276</sup> Then the dance stops as the widow and then Mavrandonis appear.

The shepherd’s reference to Charos foreshadows the arrival of Mavrandonis who bears characteristics reminiscent of the Charos figure. The features of Charos are presented in the prologue of Chortatsis’ *Ερωφίλη* that includes the monologue of Charos. He has a dark countenance (“η σκοτεινή θωριά μου” 1),<sup>277</sup> he moves with supernatural speed (“σ’ έναν ανοιγοσφάλισμα των αμματιώ αποσώνω” 77),<sup>278</sup> and also can turn a festival into a funeral, an idea similar to the transformation of the scene of dance to a death scene in Kazantzakis’ novel:

Και κάνω ξόδια τσι χαρές, και κλάηματα τα γέλια,  
σε πρίκα τη ξεφάντωσι και κλάηματα γυρίζω. (84-85)<sup>279</sup>

Mavrandonis is associated with Charos in the following ways. First, his name includes the noun *μαύρος*. In the folk songs Charos is associated with the black colour:

Μαύρος ήταν, μαύρα φορεί, μαύρο και τάλογό του.<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 249.

<sup>276</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 250.

<sup>277</sup> Chortatsis 1928: 6.

<sup>278</sup> Chortatsis 1928: 8.

<sup>279</sup> Chortatsis 1928: 8.

<sup>280</sup> N. G. Politis 1914: 226, nr 219.

Second, he appears suddenly at the door of the church, in a marginal position which may reflect the position of Charos between life and death. Third, his actions have a supernatural quality since he stealthily stabs the widow with lightning speed (“σαν αστραπή”)<sup>281</sup>. Fourth, the theme of the struggle between Zorbas and Mavrandonis and the latter’s victory evokes the combat against Charos.

Zorbas who fights with Mavrandonis as a Charos figure is indirectly linked with Digenis Akritas. Moreover, in the novel there are also direct references to Akritas. In the letter that Stavridakis sends to the narrator he refers to Akritas and presents him as the quintessentially Greek hero: “Εγώ, με την άδειά σου, τον αρχηγό αυτόν της ράτσας μας τον λέω Ακρίτα. Η λέξη αυτή μου αρέσει πιο πολύ, είναι πιο αυστηρή και πολεμόχαρη, γιατί ευτύς ως την ακούσεις τινάζεται μέσα σου πάνοπλος ο αιώνιος Έλληνας, που μάχεται ακατάπαυτα στις άκρες, στα σύνορα. Στα κάθε σύνορα –εθνικά, πνευματικά, ψυχικά”<sup>282</sup>. Here Akritas is placed within the context of the nationalistic ideology that Stavridakis advocated. However, it should be borne in mind that such ideology is not supported by Zorbas who had rejected the adherence to the idea of the nation as a limitation of freedom. Overall, the figure of Digenis is linked with the ideological perceptions of Stavridakis in explicit references to the hero but also with an indirect linking with Zorbas through allusions to the vernacular tradition.

Another category of folk songs with which the novel is linked is that of *παραλογές*. The character of Stavridakis is intertextually connected with the folk song “Του νεκρού αδελφού” in terms of quotations, references and allusions. Stavridakis is given similar features and role as Kostandis in the folk song. Giannis Stavridakis like

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<sup>281</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 253.

<sup>282</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 153.

Zorbas was a historical person and close friend of Kazantzakis. In 1927 Kazantzakis had published a short story about him including dialogues between Stavridakis and the narrator and recounting Stavridakis' mission of the repatriation of the Greeks, Stavridakis' death and his posthumous dialogue with the narrator.<sup>283</sup> These elements are also included in the novel. The association of Stavridakis in relation to the figure of Kostandis from the folk song "Του νεκρού αδελφού" is an addition of the novel that is not found in the publication of 1927.

While he is at the Cretan seashore, the narrator remembers an episode when he was abroad with Stavridakis. At the yard of a museum in Berlin the narrator saw a wagtail and asked Stavridakis if the bird talked to them. In reply Stavridakis quoted the following line from the folk song: "Πουλάκι 'ναι κι ας κελαηδεί, πουλάκι 'ναι κι ας λέει!".<sup>284</sup> Contemplating on this episode, the narrator makes an explicit reference to the folk song and raises the question regarding the meaning of its connection with Stavridakis: "κι ακόμα ο δημοτικός στίχος από το νεκρικό τραγούδι της Αρετής, όλα ετούτα, συλλογίζουμαι σήμερα, μπορεί να 'χουν κάποιο κρυφό νόημα· μα ποιο;".<sup>285</sup> This direct reference of the narrator to the folk song alerts the reader to explore the function of its incorporation into the novel.

Later, Stavridakis sends a letter to the narrator in which he explains that he has undertaken the difficult yet important mission of repatriating the Greeks of Caucasus to Greece. Stavridakis, the historical person, had actually undertaken this mission but in the novel this action is presented in connection with the dead brother in the folk song. Kostandis has the duty of helping Areti to return back to Greece and Stavridakis' actions are presented in analogous terms. The Greeks of Caucasus are

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<sup>283</sup> Kazantzakis 1927b: 364-369.

<sup>284</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 56. For the folk song see N. G. Politis 1914: 138-140, nr 92.

<sup>285</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 57.

described by Stavridakis as his brothers by blood: “είναι αίμα δικό μας”.<sup>286</sup> He wants to help them return to their mother, namely the motherland Greece: “να γυρίσουν στη μάνα τους, την Ελλάδα”.<sup>287</sup> As Kostandis was committed to a duty towards Areti, Stavridakis conceives this mission as an important duty (*χρέος*) and when he manages to fulfill it he perceives it as his ultimate success and happiness: “αρχίζω να νομίζω πως τώρα μονάχα ξέρω τι θα πει ευτυχία [...] ευτυχία θα πει να κάνεις το χρέος σου. Κι όσο πιο δύσκολο το χρέος, τόσο πιο μεγάλη η ευτυχία...”.<sup>288</sup> Stavridakis accompanied the Greek “brothers” in the journey to the motherland like Kostandis was leading the way for Areti’s homecoming. However, Kostandis’ act was fatal to Areti who eventually died in some versions of the folk song. It should be borne in mind that Stavridakis’ argumentation reflects the ideas of nationalism that Kazantzakis shared in the decade of the 1910s but not in the early 1940s when he was writing the novel. The connection may suggest Kazantzakis’ later distance from the adherence to the nationalistic ideology that he then shared with Stavridakis.

In the first scene of the novel before his departure to Crete the narrator remembers that Stavridakis committed himself to an oath that if he will be in danger, then a supernatural, spiritual connection between him and the narrator will occur.<sup>289</sup> Towards the end of the novel the narrator sees Stavridakis in a dream in which the allusions to the folk song culminate. In the folk song Kostandis has lost his hair and his physical countenance has lost the elements of life. Stavridakis at the beginning of the novel had vibrant physical characteristics and references were made to the bright

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<sup>286</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 151.

<sup>287</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 152.

<sup>288</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 298.

<sup>289</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 16-19. For the connection of the appearance of Stavridakis in the first chapter of the novel with Virgil see Paschalis 2007: 1171-1174.



colour of his eyes and his healthy countenance.<sup>290</sup> In the dream however, his body has withered and his hand is cut as he tries to touch the narrator. Just as Areti in the folk song does not yet know that Kostandis has died and as she observes his appearance she becomes suspicious about it, in the novel the narrator wakes up and suspects that Stavridakis might be dead. He then receives a telegram confirming that Stavridakis had actually died from pneumonia on the previous day when the narrator saw him in the dream. In this way, Stavridakis seems to fulfill his promise to the narrator that he would communicate supernaturally with him in case of danger. Like Kostandis he seems to fulfill his oath metaphysically while the image of his body presents a weak condition.

At the end of the novel the narrator who now knows that Stavridakis has died sees a second dream of him. In their discussion Stavridakis complains that he has been forgotten by the narrator. The depiction of this dream is reminiscent of Bergadis' *Απόκοπος* which describes the dream of the poet and his visit to the dead. *Απόκοπος* bears its title from its first line:

Μιαν από κόπου ενύσταξα, να κοιμηθώ εθυμήθην  
έθεκα στο κλινάρι μου κ' ύπνον αποκοιμήθην. (1-2).<sup>291</sup>

The dead appear to the poet in the form of shadows (“ως νέων σκιά και χαραγή” 74)<sup>292</sup> just as Stavridakis appears to the narrator as a shadow (“κι άξαφνα ένας ίσκιος έπεσε απάνω μου”)<sup>293</sup>. *Απόκοπος* depicts the sorrow of the dead because their loved ones who are still alive have forgotten them due to the pleasures of life:

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<sup>290</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 17.

<sup>291</sup> Bergadis 1971: 19.

<sup>292</sup> Bergadis 1971: 21.

<sup>293</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 311.

Και μ' άλλους τρων και πίνουνσι κ' εμάς αλησμονήσαν. (260)<sup>294</sup>

They also wish to convey the message to their loved ones that in the underworld they cannot see the beauty of nature such as the sun or the sky:

Τους εις τον Άδην έχετε από καιρόν θαμμένους,

τον ουρανόν στερεύγουνται, τον ήλιον ου θωρούσιν,

το χώμαν έχουν σάβανον, την γην στολήν φορούσιν. (487-490)<sup>295</sup>

Stavridakis in the dream expresses the same bitterness that his friend forgets him and he enjoys nature's beauty, such as the moon: “Είμαι πάντα μαζί σου, μα εσύ με ξεχνάς. Δεν έχω τη δύναμη πάντα να φωνάζω, και συ θες να με αφήσεις. Καλό 'ναι το φεγγάρι, καλά τα χιονισμένα δέντρα, καλή 'ναι η ζωή στον απάνω κόσμο –μα μη με ξεχνάς και μένα”.<sup>296</sup> Stavridakis' narrative of death which is developed throughout the novel is connected with the folk tradition in a multifaceted way. There are quotations from the folk song “Του νεκρού αδελφού” and allusions to the folk song regarding his participation in the return of the Greeks from Caucasus and his metaphysical appearance to the narrator. Moreover, his final appearance in the dream is reminiscent of the dream narratives of death that were cultivated in the vernacular literature of the Cretan Renaissance.

Overall, features of the folk tradition permeate the narrative of the novel with references to folk songs, quotations and allusions. Quotations that the characters make incorporate the language, style and iambic metre of the folk songs and allusions to folk songs reflect their themes, motifs, imagery and characters. At the same time the novel is associated with texts from the literary tradition as we shall see next.

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<sup>294</sup> Bergadis 1971: 26.

<sup>295</sup> Bergadis 1971: 32.

<sup>296</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 311.

## 2.2. MODERN GREEK LITERATURE

### *Versions of Madame Hortense from Prevelakis to Kazantzakis*

Among the characters that the narrator meets in Crete is Madame Hortense. This figure had been a historical person that had lived and died in Crete but neither Kazantzakis nor Giorgis Zorbas had actually met. The life of Madame Hortense had previously been treated in literature by Prevelakis in *To Χρονικό μιας Πολιτείας* (1938). In 1945 Madame Hortense appeared in Aris Diktaios' poem "Ορτάνς" belonging to the collection *Ελούσοβα*. Subsequently, Galateia Kazantzaki in the collection of short stories *Κρίσιμες Στιγμές* (1952) offers her own representation of Madame Hortense.<sup>297</sup> Kazantzakis incorporated the character of Madame Hortense into the novel that he started to write three years after her first literary representation in Prevelakis' *To Χρονικό μιας Πολιτείας*. Kazantzakis, like Prevelakis, describes the French origins of Madame Hortense, her sojourn in Chania, and the meeting with the admirals. The personality, however, of Madame Hortense is portrayed differently in the two works. In *To Χρονικό μιας Πολιτείας* she recounts the events of her life in a first-person narrative that is characterised by a more prosaic and sober manner without emotional outbursts.<sup>298</sup> In Kazantzakis' novel, on the other hand, she is depicted as a more profound character. Kazantzakis deliberately reworks the biographical information of Madame Hortense and creates a character of his own that seems to be larger than life. She is presented with humour through her excessive

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<sup>297</sup> For a study on the literary representations of Hortense in these writers see Manousakis 1991: 79-100. See also Agathos 2006: 137-150.

<sup>298</sup> Prevelakis 1961: 77-84.

temperament, her idiosyncratic conception of reality, her strong French accent and the mistakes that she makes in Greek, and finally through the way that Zorbas treats her.

Both Prevelakis and Kazantzakis show that she ends up getting married: in *To Χρονικό μιας Πολιτείας* she marries the doctor who saved her life, while in Kazantzakis' novel she marries Zorbas. The contrast, however, between the two texts lies in Madame Hortense's different perspective on this outcome. In *To Χρονικό μιας Πολιτείας* Madame Hortense perceives her ending up with the doctor as ill fate: “Στο τέλος, επειδή είχε περάσει και μένα ο καιρός μου, πιάστηκα λουτράρισσα στο Ρέθεμνος, από παλλακή έγινα κ' εγώ τίμια και μοναχοκοιμούσα –έτσι τότε γραμμένο το καταραμένο το ριζικό μου. Εκεί με είπαν Φατιμέ, κ' εγώ το δέχτηκα, και κύλησαν τα χρόνια χωρίς να το καταλάβω”.<sup>299</sup> In Prevelakis' version, Madame Hortense changes only externally by altering her name while in Kazantzakis' novel she is presented as attempting to change habits and live a moral life.

#### *Palamas' “Θάνατος Παλληκαριού” and the death of Madame Hortense*

The biographical information of Madame Hortense as a historical person reports that at the end of her life she settled in a village near Ierapetra of Crete, where she was welcomed and appreciated by the local people. Manousakis writes: “Στα τελευταία της χρόνια γίνεται φιλόανθρωπη. Βοηθά φτωχούς, βαφτίζει και παντρεύει. Ακούει τα βάσανα του κόσμου και δίνει συμβουλές. Πεθαίνει το 1938, εβδομηνταπέντε χρονών, έχοντας κερδίσει την αγάπη των Ιεραπετριτών”.<sup>300</sup> Kazantzakis distances himself from historical reality in his depiction of the life,

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<sup>299</sup> Prevelakis 1961: 84.

<sup>300</sup> Manousakis 1991: 81.

personality, and death of Madame Hortense. She does not win the appreciation of the villagers and she does not become an integral member of the local community.

The death of Madame Hortense recalls the death of the hero in Palamas' *Θάνατος Παλληκαριού* (1891). Mitros Roumeliotis, the protagonist, is presented as the embodiment of "παλληκαριά". In this context he bears characteristics that are analogous to Zorbas. Mitros has a pride that makes him prefer death to being severely wounded and unable to retain his previous beauty and power:

Ο Μήτρος ο Ρουμελιώτης είταν αληθινό παλληκάρι κ' είχεν όλα τα χαρίσματα του παλληκαριού· τα λόγια, την ορμή, το φιλότιμο, την ομορφιά και την περηφάνεια, την αγάπη της ζωής και την καταφρόνια του θανάτου. [...] Αντρειωμένος είταν· τον κίνδυνο δεν τονε συνερίζονταν, την αρρώστια δεν τη λαχτάριζε, το Χάρο δεν τον έτρεμεν. Ένας μόνο στοχασμός του έκοβε τα ήπατα, του πάγωνε το αίμα, τότε μαρμάρωνε. Δεν ήθελε να μείνη σημαδεμένος [...] Καλύτερα ο θάνατος.<sup>301</sup>

Zorbas expresses similar ideas arguing that death is preferable to sickness or the inability to preserve strength, vigor and liveliness. He states "Ο Θάνατος δεν είναι τίποτα, ένα φoff! και σβήνει το κερί· μα τα γερατιά είναι μεγάλη ντροπή".<sup>302</sup> Zorbas also adds: "Αν ψοφήσω γρήγορα, πάει καλά, έχω εμπιστοσύνη· μα αν ζήσω ακόμα πολύ, χάθηκα· χάθηκα, αφεντικό, θα 'ρθει μέρα που θα εξευτελιστώ. Θα χάσω τη λευτεριά μου [...]".<sup>303</sup>

Although Zorbas has the bravery of the lad, he avoids his tragic ending. The end of Mitros is not evoked in the death of Zorbas but of Madame Hortense and this shows ingenuity on Kazantzakis' part. Madame Hortense catches a cold which proves fatal as she goes to the church during Holy week like Mitros who is wounded at a similar time and occasion, namely while he goes to the church on Good Friday before

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<sup>301</sup> Palamas n.d: 18. Volume 4.

<sup>302</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 156.

<sup>303</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 157.

the Epitaphios. Palamas depicts the mingling of life and death as the dying man wishes to be accompanied by his fellow villagers and they all gather in his room. The narrator describes the scene of Mitros' death in terms that could be applied to the death of Madame Hortense: "Να μην ήξερε κανείς τίποτε, να μη γρικούσε τον ήχο, θα στοχάζονταν, όχι πως διάβαιναν ο Χάρος από κει, μα πως είχε στηθή μεγάλο πανηγύρι".<sup>304</sup> Mitros' mother as well as the villagers start singing *μοιρολόγια* mourning his death while he is still alive since Mitros himself has asked them to do so. The dying man is also thinking about his beauty: "Και καθώς είπεν «ωραία νιάτα», έτσι τον πήρε για στερνή φορά κ' η φροντίδα της νιότης, του στολισμού και της εμορφιάς, η φροντίδα, που δεν τ' αφήνει τα παλληκάρια και μέσα στην αγκαλιά του Χάρου".<sup>305</sup> Similarly, Madame Hortense remembers her beautiful youth and forgets her current condition. Moreover, Mitros' statement of his unwillingness to die as he cries "Δεν θέλω να πεθάνω"<sup>306</sup> is said by Madame Hortense in the same words with the addition, however, of foreign accent: "Ντεν τέλω να πετάνω".<sup>307</sup>

In the final moments of Madame Hortense's life the people of the village impatiently await her death so that they can steal her belongings. The narrator seems to feel more sympathy for the bad condition of Madame Hortense's shoes than for the condition of Madame Hortense herself. He says: "Τα γοβάκια της, ξεπατωμένα, στραβοπατημένα, ξεπρόβαιναν, από το γύρο του κρεβατιού, κι η καρδιά σου πιάνουνταν να τα βλέπεις· περισσότερο τα γοβάκια αυτά σε πίκραιναν από την ίδια την κυρά τους".<sup>308</sup> Not even Madame Hortense understands her state fully as she is in a blissful condition and envisions in a daydream the admirals and the four fleets.

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<sup>304</sup> Palamas n.d.: 36. Volume 4.

<sup>305</sup> Palamas n.d.: 34. Volume 4.

<sup>306</sup> Palamas n.d.: 35. Volume 4.

<sup>307</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 264.

<sup>308</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 263.

Moreover her parrot is depicted as happy (“θυμήθηκε περασμένες ολονυχτίες και τινάχτηκε απάνω χαρούμενος”).<sup>309</sup>

Furthermore, just like Mitros is mourned while he is still alive, professional mourning women enter the house of Madame Hortense and start mourning although she had not died yet.<sup>310</sup> Then, after her death the mourning women sing a lament that praises the lost beauty of the dead. The lament is the following:

Δε σο' πρεπε δε σο' μοιαζε στη γη κρεββατοστρώση  
μον' σο 'πρεπε μον' σο 'μοιαζε στου Μάη το περιβόλι  
ανάμεσα σε δυο μηλιές, σε δυο νεραντζοπούλες  
να πέφτουν τ' άνθ' απάνω σου, τα μήλα στην ποδιά σου  
τα κρεμεζογαρούφαλα τριγύρω στο λαιμό σου.<sup>311</sup>

The novel includes the first, the fourth and the fifth line of the above lament. The quotations are visible in the text as they appear in the form of italics. There are adjustments in the language as the words *δε σο' πρεπε* of the folk song appear as *δε σου 'πρεπε*. Moreover, the words *τ' άνθ' απάνω* and *τριγύρω* of the folk song are found as *τ' άνθη απάνω* and *τριγύρα* in the novel. The mourning women sing the folk song and in this way they convey its oral dimension. However, the mourning songs are being heard with interruptions as the women are eating and occasionally fight between themselves for the distribution of Madame Hortense's property. Nobody seems to be taking her death seriously and after her death people engage in a feast with lyra players, dancers and drunk people.

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<sup>309</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 265.

<sup>310</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 267.

<sup>311</sup> Saunier 1999: 272.

In *Θάνατος Παλληκαριού* the people surrounding Mitros seem to be preoccupied with their own thoughts and concerns. Morpho, the girl who is presented as having caused his fatal injury through magic spells shows signs of contentment (“Μια μυστική χαρά λαμπίριζε στα μάτια της, και το κλεισμένο στόμα της δεν τ’ άνοιγεν, όμως το χάραζ’ ελαφρότατα μιαν αδιόρατη γραμμή που έμοιαζε χαμόγελο”).<sup>312</sup> Palamas depicts a blending of life and death since Mitros is mourned while he is alive and his death offers a tragic kind of satisfaction. A notion of synthesis of life and death is conveyed in the following excerpt which is set at the moment, when Mitros conceives the desire of being led to death surrounded by people, who are mourning for him: “Κι ο μάγος ο ήλιος τον εμάγεψε· τον εμέθυσε μ’ ένα παράξενο κι απάντεχο κρασί, καμωμένο από ζωή κι από θάνατο”.<sup>313</sup> Kazantzakis creates a synthesis of life and death in Madame Hortense’s final moments and also in the impact of her death.

Through connections that are detected in the theme, images and repetitions of key-words, the novel is linked with an earlier literary text, Palamas’ *Θάνατος Παλληκαριού*. The episode also contains material from folk laments and demonstrates a merging of the folk tradition and Modern Greek literature. At the same time there are divergences as the previous works are reworked in the new context of the novel. In the narration of the episode of Madame Hortense’s death the reader is reminded of an earlier, canonical Modern Greek text which is radically revised in this rewriting.

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<sup>312</sup> Palamas n.d.: 39. Volume 4.

<sup>313</sup> Palamas n.d.: 33. Volume 4.



The depiction of Zorbas as a brave and unconventional man is intertextually connected with Myrivilis' *Ο Βασίλης ο Αρβανίτης*. It first appeared as a short story in 1934 in the newspaper *Πρωία*, it was published again in 1939 in the collection of short stories *Το Γαλάζιο Βιβλίο* and the extended version of the story was published in 1943. In this year Kazantzakis was completing the writing of *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά*. In Kazantzakis' library a copy of the 1943 edition of Myrivilis' book is found including a dedication by the author.

In *Ο Βασίλης ο Αρβανίτης* and *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* the lives of historical persons are narrated, namely Stratis Arvanitis and Giorgis Zorbas respectively. Myrivilis had heard about Stratis Arvanitis from the people of Lesbos who were celebrating his deeds even in impromptu lines after Arvanitis' death in 1920.<sup>314</sup> Kazantzakis had met Zorbas in 1915 on Mount Athos. They worked together at a mine in Prastova and they cooperated for the repatriation of the Greeks of Caucasus.<sup>315</sup> Myrivilis' and Kazantzakis' choice of retaining the last names of the protagonists (Arvanitis and Zorbas) and changing their first names may reflect the blending of reality and fiction in the rendering of the characters' stories. What is more, the real last names of the protagonists happen to bear a meaning that is close to their behavior as fictional characters. The word Arvanitis is an ethnic adjective and it metaphorically refers to a troublemaker, or a stubborn person as the name "Zorbas" does.<sup>316</sup> This is a chance coincidence that is exploited by both authors. The real last names of the historical persons are linked with the type of person that causes trouble

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<sup>314</sup> Valetas examines Stratis Arvanitis as the model of Myrivilis' story in Valetas 1972: 300-306.

<sup>315</sup> On the acquaintance of Zorbas and Kazantzakis see Anapliotis 2003.

<sup>316</sup> Word entry "Αρβανίτης" in Papyrus Larousse Britannica, volume 3, 1963. The meaning of "Arvanitis" as a stubborn person is also found in Myrivilis' text. See Myrivilis 2006: 29.

and disorder, a feature that fits the way that the characters are presented in the two works. The example of Vasilis Arvanitis may have been a factor that prompted Kazantzakis to treat Zorbas in the same way.

Kazantzakis and Myrivilis employ a similar narrative technique in their novels. In both cases an anonymous narrator recounts the life and deeds of the main character. The one asserts that he met Arvanitis when he was very young whereas the other met Zorbas at a mature age as he asserts in the prologue. The ideal of freedom is the most important trait of the character of Zorbas and Arvanitis and is reflected in every aspect of their life: music, women, homeland, God, life and death. Arvanitis and Zorbas want to be released from every human convention that limits their freedom. One manifestation of their yearning for freedom is found in their relationship with women. Both Zorbas and Arvanitis are drawn to women who do not follow the conventional morals of the rural community.<sup>317</sup> In *Ο Βασίλης ο Αρβανίτης* the two sisters, Chadoula and Chrysavgi, defy the morals of their village by having concurrently a relationship with Arvanitis. Zorbas' relationship with women is also unconventional. The women that attract him, Nousa and Madame Hortense, have a free spirit just like him. His first wedding night with Nousa transforms into a night of orgy. When Zorbas and the narrator meet Madame Hortense she recounts the story of her relationship with the four admirals. Vasilis Arvanitis presents the two sisters with medals that they flaunt in front of the village (“φορούσαν περασμένα στο λαιμό τα δυο παρασήματα του Βασίλη”),<sup>318</sup> while Madame Hortense complains that she did not

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<sup>317</sup> See Agathos 2008: 38.

<sup>318</sup> Myrivilis 2006: 71.

acquire a medal after her role in her relationship with the admirals (“Αν είδατε σεις παράσημο, είδα κι εγώ”).<sup>319</sup>

The narration of the widow’s victimisation and the subsequent story involving her daughters and Arvanitis in Myrivilis’ text is evoked in Kazantzakis’ novel. In *Ο Βασίλης ο Αρβανίτης* the widow, Labrini, is mistreated by the villagers who throw stones at her house and she is consequently driven away from the village fleeing to the town (“στη Χώρα”).<sup>320</sup> Right after this episode the narrative proceeds to the first meeting of her daughters with Arvanitis. While they watch Vasilis dancing, Chadoula says that Arvanitis is “όμορφος σαν τον αρχάγγελο που παίρνει τις ψυχές”.<sup>321</sup> The second time when this phrase is uttered in the narrative it introduces a context of death since what follows is Arvanitis’ challenging of God and his consequent demise.<sup>322</sup> In *Ο Βασίλης ο Αρβανίτης* the phrase “σαν τον αρχάγγελο που παίρνει τις ψυχές” in the first case follows a dance and in the second case it precedes a death. The phrases appear in the version of the story that was published by Myrivilis in *Το Γαλάζιο Βιβλίο* in 1939 and also in the 1943 edition of the text.<sup>323</sup>

In *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* exactly the same phrase appears and it is also situated in an episode after a dance and prior to a death scene. After the dance of the young shepherd named Siphakas, Anagnostis comments on his dance and repeats the phrase that has been uttered about Vasilis Arvanitis’ dance. Anagnostis says: “Σαν αρχάγγελος είναι ο αφιλότιμος, που παίρνει τις ψυχές”.<sup>324</sup> The dance ends abruptly with the arrival of the widow. What follows is the widow’s murder by

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<sup>319</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 51.

<sup>320</sup> Myrivilis 2006: 55.

<sup>321</sup> Myrivilis 2006: 56.

<sup>322</sup> Myrivilis 2006: 97.

<sup>323</sup> Myrivilis 1939: 142.

<sup>324</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 249.

Mavrandonis. The death of the widow in *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* like the death of Arvanitis takes place on Easter day.<sup>325</sup> In Kazantzakis' novel the death of the widow is presented by the narrator as having a divine symbolism: "[...] η χήρα κείτονταν στη θύμησή μου ήσυχη, σχεδόν χαμογελαστή, στη θείαν ακινησία του συμβόλου".<sup>326</sup> For the Christians the symbolism of Resurrection is that death, which succeeds life, is defeated by new life. The two texts stress the idea of the cycle of life and death by presenting the death of the widow and Arvanitis on the Easter day.

What most encapsulates the idea of freedom in both books is the role of dancing. The leaps of Zorbas when he dances recall Arvanitis' leap. When they leap they are both compared to winged archangels flying above the surface of the water. Vasilis Arvanitis is presented in the following words: "Σαν αητός και σαν αρχάγγελος άνοιξε τις φτερούγες και πέρασε μεσ' από τον αέρα, πάνω από το νερό που φουρκάλιαζε".<sup>327</sup> Zorbas is depicted as follows: "Έδωκε ένα σάλτο, τα πόδια και τα χέρια του έγιναν φτερούγες. Όρθιος χιμούσε απάνω από της γης, κι έτσι που τον έβλεπα στο βάθος τ' ουρανού και της θάλασσας, μου φάνταζε σαν ένας γέρος αρχάγγελος αντάρτης".<sup>328</sup> Zorbas and Arvanitis dance the zeimbekiko.<sup>329</sup> In both texts it is described as a dance of valiant men: ("[...] παλληκαρίσιους χορούς. Ζεϊμπέκικους και χασάπικους"<sup>330</sup>, "Θα σε μάθω πρώτα πρώτα το ζεϊμπέκικο· άγριος, παλικαρίσιος"<sup>331</sup>). The dance of Arvanitis' friends through which they express their sorrow for his death is similar to Zorbas' dance for the death of his son. In both texts

<sup>325</sup> For a reading of the widow's death on Easter day in the context of ritual see Stavropoulou 2006: 236-237.

<sup>326</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 255.

<sup>327</sup> Myrivilis 2006: 74.

<sup>328</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 295.

<sup>329</sup> See Vitti 1980: 123.

<sup>330</sup> Myrivilis 2006: 70.

<sup>331</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 294.

dance is not only a means of entertainment but can be used to express various feelings such as sorrow or joy.

With regard to music, Arvanitis enjoys the sound of eastern musical instruments *νταούλι* and *ζουρνάς*. Musicians travel from Anatolia to Lesbos in order to play for him and his friends. Zorbas himself plays the *σαντούρι*, another eastern musical instrument. The *σαντούρι* is described as free like himself. This is what Zorbas says when his improvised melodies are not successful: “Άρχισε ένα τραγούδι, δεν έβγαινε, το παράτησε, άρχισε άλλο, οι κόρδες σκλήριζαν σα να πονούσαν, σα να μην ήθελαν”.<sup>332</sup> And he infers that: “-Δε θέλει... μουρμούρισε, κοιτάζοντας με τρόπο το σαντούρι’ δε θέλει...”.<sup>333</sup> As *σαντούρι* bears characteristics of a person (it shouts, it is in pain), it is presented just like a person possessing a free will (“Δε θέλει”). The sense of freedom that characterises eastern music is what appeals to Arvanitis and Zorbas. *Νταούλι*, *ζουρνάς*, and *σαντούρι* are more than mere musical instruments: they seem to be an extension of Arvanitis and Zorbas themselves and bear a significant role in the scenes of their death. After Arvanitis’ death the sound of *νταούλι* rings among the living and the dead.<sup>334</sup> Zorbas bequeaths the *σαντούρι* to the narrator so that it may remind him of Zorbas after his death.

One further aspect that connects Zorbas and Arvanitis is their release from the idea of homeland.<sup>335</sup> They fought in the struggles of Greece and they have both participated in the Macedonian war. Their deeds have a national value in the eyes of their fellow countrymen. For the narrator and the villagers, Arvanitis’ clash with the

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<sup>332</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 89.

<sup>333</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 89.

<sup>334</sup> Myrivilis 2006: 112.

<sup>335</sup> For an examination of the two characters in the context of Greekness and their distance from nationalism, see Agathos 2008: 36-37. For the character of Zorbas and the rejection of nationalism see Kastrinaki 2006: 151-162.

Turks assumes national importance: “έπαιρνε στα μάτια μας εθνικό νόημα”.<sup>336</sup> However, Arvanitis states that he was never an adherent of nationalism. Zorbas was in the past acting according to the dictates of the nation but he regretted the killings that he committed in the wars for his homeland. This happened after seeing the orphan children of a Bulgarian man that he had killed. Zorbas as well as Arvanitis is released from allegiance to the nation or God because they do not advocate any single ideology and do not achieve personal fulfillment by serving a single person. Arvanitis leaves Macedonia owing to his feeling of stagnancy and fights at the side of the Young Turks, an act which expresses his lack of nationalism and his willingness to fight anyway. Although the Young Turks wanted to keep Arvanitis with them, he abandons them for the same reason that he deserted the Greeks: “τι να κάνω να μείνω, είπε ο Βασίλης. Το στεκάμενο νερό χλωτίζει και μαραγγιάζει και ’γω δεν είμαι νερό για τη χαβούζα”.<sup>337</sup> A single purpose and ideology is for Arvanitis what a stagnant pool is for water whose true nature is revealed when it is in constant motion. Just as in *Ο Βασίλης ο Αρβανίτης* adherence to a single idea translates as stagnation, similarly in *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* it is equivalent to servitude. The narrator after discussing with Zorbas concludes: “Μα μήπως κι αυτό δεν είναι σκλαβιά; Να θυσιάζεσαι για μιαν ιδέα, για τη ράτσα σου, για το Θεό;”.<sup>338</sup>

Another notion from which Zorbas and Arvanitis yearn to be freed is that of God. Given that the novel’s title evokes the titles of Byzantine narratives recounting the lives of saints, a question that arises is what kind of saint Zorbas appears to be. When their enterprise fails, the narrator envisions that he and Zorbas will establish a monastery of freedom where he will be holding the keys like Saint Peter: “-Μη

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<sup>336</sup> Myrivilis 2006: 81.

<sup>337</sup> Myrivilis 2006: 56.

<sup>338</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 35.

θλίβεσαι, Ζορμπά, θα ξανασμίξουμε πάλι και θα βάλουμε, ποιος ξέρει, μεγάλη η δύναμη του ανθρώπου! σε πράξη το μεγάλο μας σχέδιο: Να χτίσουμε μοναστήρι όπως το θέμε εμείς, χωρίς Θεό, χωρίς διάολο, με λεύτερους ανθρώπους, και θα κάθεται εσύ, Ζορμπά, στην πόρτα, να κρατάς τα κλειδιά, σαν τον Άγιο Πέτρο, ν' ανοίγεις και να κλείνεις...".<sup>339</sup> The novel employs devices and conventions that stem from the tradition of the narrations of lives of saints but it treats them with a twist and subverts them. From this perspective it is close to Emmanuel Roidis' *Η Πάπισσα Ιωάννα*, the novel that employs the conventions of the historical novel in order to subvert them treating at the same time with criticism the religious matters that it develops.

Zorbas is presented in the novel as a man who is free and preserves his freedom in every aspect of his life.<sup>340</sup> Arvanitis' desire to be released from God leads him to obstruct the procession of the Epitaphios thus not allowing his fellow villagers to perform their religious observances. His function as a symbol of freedom is temporarily compromised at the moment when he limits the freedom of other people. The narrator observes that: "τόρα που κατέπεσε ο ερεθισμός της περιφάνιας του, ένιωσε την ερημιά της νίκης να τον τυλίγει και να τον ξεμοναχιάζει, όπως γίνεται με τον καθένα που κρεμάζει στον ώμο, ντουφέκι, το δικό του το νόμο".<sup>341</sup> The scene which follows where Arvanitis falls into a ditch and is mortally wounded echoes the fall of the biblical angel after rebelling against God. At the end Arvanitis decides to kill himself so as not to be "defeated" by God.<sup>342</sup>

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<sup>339</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 303.

<sup>340</sup> On the concept of freedom in the works of Kazantzakis see Grammatas 1983 and Stamatiou 1971.

<sup>341</sup> Myrivilis 2006: 99.

<sup>342</sup> See Athanasopoulos 1992: 72-74.

In his discussions with the narrator, Zorbas expresses the view that God is a notion that poses limits to human freedom. Although Zorbas does not believe in God he is careful not to challenge the villagers' religious beliefs. For instance, he advises the narrator not to engage in discussions about God with the villagers because religion is pivotal in their life. Therefore unlike Arvanitis who violently prevents the villagers from conducting their religious rites, Zorbas while an unbeliever himself is respectful towards other people's faith. Zorbas expresses indignation against God and a desire to fight against him comparable to that of Arvanitis: “-Πφφ! χαρά στο κόκαλο που μου πέταξε ο Θεοδιάλογος! [...] –Μα ποιος είναι αυτός, φώναξε, ποιος είναι αυτός που μας πετάει τα κόκαλα; Περίμενε λίγο, και μην ακούγοντας να του αποκρίνουμε, φούρκισε. –Δε μιλάς, αφεντικό; Αν ξέρεις, πες μου να ξέρω κι εγώ τ’ όνομά του, κι έγνοια σου, σου τότε συγγυρίζω. Μα έτσι, στα κουτουρού, κατά που να ριχτώ; Θα σπάσω τα μούτρα μου”.<sup>343</sup> The awareness that he will be utterly defeated if he engages in such an impossible struggle with a divine entity that he can neither see nor define reflects Arvanitis' story. Indeed Arvanitis' complaint was that he did not have anyone to fight with: “[...] γιατί δεν κατέβηκε κι αυτός σαν άντρας να με βαρέσει σαν τούκοψα το δρόμο;”.<sup>344</sup> Whereas Zorbas realises that he cannot comprehend the nature of God and so he cannot fight, Arvanitis defines God as a man whom he can physically confront revealing thereby his defiance of the divine.

Arvanitis in this struggle against God finally shows that his spirit is so free that it cannot be confined in the constraints of his body. The description of his suicide denotes fury against his body: “Χτυπά στο βυζί του, το καρφώνει μια, το καρφώνει δυο φορές ως το μανίκι, δυνατά, με πείσμα. Ακούγεται και τις δυο φορές η γροθιά να

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<sup>343</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 193.

<sup>344</sup> Myrivilis 2006: 105.



βροντά πάνω στο στέρνο”.<sup>345</sup> Zorbas comments that when a free soul cannot be contained within the body it turns against God: “η ψυχή μεγαλώνει, δεν τη χωράει πια το παλιοτόμαρο, αντροκαλιέται το Θεό να παλέψουν”.<sup>346</sup> Zorbas’ phrase evokes Arvanitis’ challenge to God to fight him like a man (“σαν άντρας”).<sup>347</sup> While Zorbas does not fatally harm his body, he does however chop off his finger because it is limiting his freedom: “Αυτό θα πει να ’σαι άνθρωπος, σου λέω: Ελευτερία! [...] και το δάχτυλο; -Να, μ’ εμπόδιζε στον τροχό· έμπαινε στη μέση και μου χαλούσε τα σχέδια”.<sup>348</sup>

The notion of the intention of a man to confront God can also be detected in Greek folk songs. In the following lament the inability of the man to fight due to God’s distance from him is also observed:

Α ρε Θεέ από ψηλά  
που δε σε φτάνει ούτε γκρας.  
Δε κατεβαίνεις χαμπηλά  
να πούμε δικαιώματα;<sup>349</sup>

In another lament the distance of man from God is depicted in the following way:

Τι ναν του κάνω του Θεού, που ’ναι ψηλά κλεισμένος!<sup>350</sup>

In the above folk songs a man expresses the wish to confront God and at the same time he recognises his inability to do so due to the distance that separates them.

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<sup>345</sup> Myrivilis 2006: 106.

<sup>346</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 63.

<sup>347</sup> Myrivilis 2006: 105.

<sup>348</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 29.

<sup>349</sup> Saunier 1999: 472.

<sup>350</sup> Saunier 1999: 473.

The clash of a mortal against a supernatural force before death is found in the folk songs of the Akritic cycle. We observed earlier that Zorbas is indirectly linked with Akritas as he fights against Mavrandonis who bears features of Charos. Arvanitis bears common elements with Digenis as he is depicted in the epic poem of *Διγενής Ακρίτης*. Some parallel features of Arvanitis and Digenis of the epic poem are their shared name Vasileios, the heroic leap of Arvanitis and the leap that Digenis suggests in order to prove his valour to the “apelates”, their promiscuity as Arvanitis is connected with the two Labrines and Digenis has an adulterous affair with an Amazon. Moreover, other common elements are: the placement of the plot at the borders of the Byzantine Empire and the borders of Greece respectively, the depiction of the mingling of the Christian with the Islamic world and finally the death of both figures at a young age.

Zorbas resembles Arvanitis in his brave attitude, his yearning for freedom, his unconventional character and in his lack of adherence to a nationalistic ideology. Like Arvanitis, he is fearless towards death but whereas Arvanitis’ lack of fear leads ultimately to his suicide and he departs life with tears, Zorbas’ intrepidity makes him enjoy life to the fullest and depart from it with laughter. On the one hand he reflects Arvanitis’ thirst for freedom but on the other hand he avoids the latter’s self-destructive behaviour. In this way the main character of the novel is placed within a tradition of folk songs and literary works which explore the features of a brave, folk hero but at the same time introduces new aspects as he also diverges from them in his ideas and actions. Kazantzakis’ novel alludes to *Ο Βασίλης ο Αρβανίτης*, a novella that depicts a folk hero who had been a real, historical person while his beliefs and actions are recounted by the narrator in the text. This connection demonstrates the synthesis

of antithetical patterns such as real life and fiction, folk tradition and literary tradition as well as the written and the oral speech.

*Storytellers' journeys: Vizyinos' "Το μόνον της ζωής του ταξείδιον"*

The narrator recalls as a flashback the death of his grandfather and the recounting of this story in Kazantzakis' novel alludes to the narrator and his grandfather in Vizyinos' short story *Το μόνον της ζωής του ταξείδιον*. In *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* the narrator's grandfather lived in a village between Heraklion and Rethymnon and had never travelled anywhere else. He offered hospitality to passers-by and his reward was to listen to their stories from other places. In Vizyinos' short story the basic characteristic of the narrator's grandfather is that he too has never travelled anywhere in his life and thus his favorite pastime is to listen to travellers' tales and then recount them himself. In Kazantzakis' novel the narrator's grandfather enjoys listening to stories about other places for the sheer pleasure of the narration: "Δεν είχε ξεπορτίσει ποτέ ο παππούς μου από το χωριό του· μήτε στο Μεγάλο Κάστρο είχε πάει μήτε στο Ρέθεμνος. «Τι να πάω; έλεγε· από δω περνούν οι Ρεθεμνιώτες και Καστρινοί, έρχεται το Ρέθεμνος και το Κάστρο στο σπίτι μου, ας είναι καλά. Τι ανάγκη έχω να πάω εγώ;”<sup>351</sup>

One dimension that the narrator in *Το μόνον της ζωής του ταξείδιον* mentions as important is the means of travelling and he links the shoes of the grandfather with the action of travelling:

Μόνον τα υποδήματα του παππού, τα πάντοτε ξεσκονισμένα και «γλαμπερά», μόνον αυτά δεν ευρίσκοντο με τας μύτας αυτών εστραμμένας προς την έξοδον, προ της

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<sup>351</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 62.

θύρας του δωματίου, εν ω συνήθως διημέρευεν ο γέρον. Η έλλειψις αύτη έκαμε την οικίαν να φανή εις τους οφθαλμούς μου κενή, έρημος, εγκαταλελειμμένη. Ο παππούς έλειπεν! Και επειδή δεν ηδυνάμην να υποθέσω, ότι έλειπεν εις κανέν ταξείδιον, θλιβερόν προαίσθημα ανεβίβασε τα δάκρυα εις τους οφθαλμούς μου...<sup>352</sup>

The boy has a premonition about the grandfather's absence as throughout the story the grandfather is imagined to be fighting with the angel. The journey that the grandfather in Vizyinos' story likes to make is to reach the point where the sky begins:

-Ναι, παππού! Η γης τελειώνει αυτού πέρα και αρχίζει ο ουρανός.

-Αι χακ! ανεφώνησεν ο γέρον έτι μάλλον ευχαριστημένος. Είτα προσηλώσας επ' εμού υπερήφανον βλέμμα· -Ως εκεί πέρα, είπε, μ' εβάσταξε να ταξειδέψω!<sup>353</sup>

The narrator presents the will of the grandfather for this journey to be fulfilled at his death. As his soul is released by his body it travels to the sky and the happiness is reflected in the smile that the grandfather has:

Τι δεν θα έδινεν όπως τον εμποδίση από τούτο ταξείδιον! Διότι το μειδίαμα του παππού ήτον η λάμψις, ην έσυρεν οπίσω της η προς ουρανόν αποδημούσα ψυχή του. Διότι ο καϋμένος ο παππούς συνεπλήρωνε αληθώς τώρα "το μόνον της ζωής του ταξείδιον".<sup>354</sup>

In Kazantzakis' novel, the narrator as a child similarly imagines his grandfather travelling above the clouds, which constitutes the journey of his death:

-Ο παππούς μου εμένα φορούσε λαστιχένια παπούτσια. Μια μέρα, όταν έβγαλε άσπρα γένια, πήδηξε από τη στέγη του σπιτιού μας· μα ως άγγιξε τη γης, αντιστοιβαξε σαν τόπι κι ανέβηκε πιο αψηλά από το σπίτι -κι όλο και πιο αψηλά, πιο αψηλά, πιο αψηλά, ωσότου χάθηκε στα σύννεφα. Έτσι πέθανε ο παππούς μου.<sup>355</sup>

The boy stresses the shoes as a means for the journey as the boy does in Vizyinos' short story. The grandfather of the narrator in *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη*

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<sup>352</sup> Vizyinos 1994: 184.

<sup>353</sup> Vizyinos 1994: 197.

<sup>354</sup> Vizyinos 1994: 201.

<sup>355</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 82-83.

*Ζορμπά* as well as the grandfather of *Το μόνον της ζωής του ταξείδιον*, who have never travelled although they enjoy stories regarding travelling, experience the journey they wish through death. The only journey of the grandfather in Vizyinos' story is the metaphorical journey of his death. Similarly the grandfather of the narrator in Kazantzakis' novel is given posthumously the journey that he never experienced alive. The two grandfathers reach the skies in the children's imagination and thus they are presented to accomplish through their death actions what they did not fulfill in life.

Vizyinos' short story includes folk elements while he has also been characterised as a writer-intellectual.<sup>356</sup> In Kazantzakis' novel the narrator illuminates elements of his past and his family alluding to the narrator of *Το μόνον της ζωής του ταξείδιον* as well as with his relationship with his grandfather. Both the young narrator of *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* and the narrator of *Το μόνον της ζωής του ταξείδιον* as he recalls the years of his childhood are said to descend from ancestors who relished the act of narration. They seem to have inherited a passion for narration that goes back to their past and they are continuing it through their own stories. The two narrators depict in the text the stories of characters who recounted stories in oral speech reflecting in this way the integration of the written and the oral. In *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* the narrator is linked with other characters who are also narrators such as the narrator of *Το μόνον της ζωής του ταξείδιον* and also the narrator of *Λεμονοδάσος* as we will examine in the paragraphs that follow.

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<sup>356</sup> Moullas 1994: νς'.

In Kazantzakis' novel Zorbas emerges as the archetypical man of the people with whom the narrator seeks to come to contact. The narrator presents himself in a homecoming to Crete which at the same time is an internal journey in search of identity. The novel includes features that are related to Kosmas Politis' *Λεμονοδάσος* (1930). In *Λεμονοδάσος* Pavlos, the narrator, is a writer and the greater part of the novel is a diary. *Λεμονοδάσος* as well as *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* start with a homecoming. Pavlos returns to Greece after his sojourn in Paris. In *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* the narrator returns to his home-island, Crete. They both introduce themselves to the reader as determined to change their life and re-explore it, since the way of life that they had before is not fulfilling. At the outset of the novel they both present themselves as writers and are immersed in their intellectual activities. As the plot unfolds, however, the life of action conquers them more and more.

Pavlos asserts, nonetheless, that writing hinders action: “οι συγγραφείς είναι τεμπέλικη ράτσα, παραδομένη στην ονειροπόληση”.<sup>357</sup> He considers a balance of matter with spirit as the ideal condition: “[...] η αρμονία της ύλης με το πνεύμα. Η χαρά της ζωής...”.<sup>358</sup> Similarly, this is the quest of the narrator in *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* who sets his agenda at the opening scene of the novel explaining that he will attempt to stop being only a man of the spirit and instead merge spirit with matter and contemplation with action. The narrator states explicitly his need to achieve a synthesis of opposites: “μ’ έτρωγε η απλοϊκή λαχτάρα να συνδυάσω και τα

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<sup>357</sup> K. Politis 1944: 10.

<sup>358</sup> K. Politis 1944: 15.

δυο, να βρω τη σύνθεση όπου να αδερφωθούν οι θανάσιμες αντίθετες”.<sup>359</sup> This blend of antitheses represents the essence of life, which is what the two novels attempt to grasp and depict, manifested already in the subtitle of Kosmas Politis’ novel “η ιστορία μιας ζωής” and the title of Kazantzakis’ novel which includes the word “life” (“βίος”).

Both Pavlos and the narrator of *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* explore the past, a quest which has an effect on their life in the present. They examine the Byzantine past in their visits to churches. In the two works the Byzantine era is linked with darkness and decadence. In *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* as the narrator enters the church, he states: “Δρασκελίστα το κατώφλι της εκκλησίας και βυθίστηκα στο δροσερό μυρωδάτο μεσόφωτο”.<sup>360</sup> This phrase is linked with the words of Pavlos as he enters the Byzantine church in *Λεμονοδάσος*: “Κατεβαίνομε μπροστά σε κάποια χαμηλή πορτούλα, κι’ όπως τη διασκελίζομε αφήνω πίσω το χαρούμενο φως της αρχαίας Ελλάδας και κατεβαίνω στο σκοτάδι του μεσαίωνα”.<sup>361</sup> Before he enters the Byzantine church Pavlos contemplates Bacchus and drunkenness: “το άλικο αίμα του Άδωνι. Άδωνι, Άδωνι, Ίακχε, Βάκχε...”.<sup>362</sup> The narrator of *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* after his visit to the church emphasises the affinity between the ancient Dionysus and the Byzantine saint Bacchus: “Έλληνας Διόνυσος κι άγιος Βάκχος έσμιγαν, είχαν το ίδιο πρόσωπο· κάτω από τ’ αμπελόφυλλα και τα ράσα τρικύμιζε το ίδιο λαχταριστό ηλιοκαμένο κορμί –η Ελλάδα”.<sup>363</sup> The notion of the synthesis of the ancient paganism and Christianity through the juxtaposition of the figure of Dionysus

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<sup>359</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 64.

<sup>360</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 207.

<sup>361</sup> K. Politis 1944: 71.

<sup>362</sup> K. Politis 1944: 70.

<sup>363</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 208.

and Christ had also been developed in the poetry of Sikelianos. In Sikelianos' poem "Διώνυσος-Ιησούς" of *Η συνείδηση της πίστης* Dionysus is connected with Christ.<sup>364</sup>

An important aspect of the exploration of the past in the two novels is the visit to ancient ruins. In *Λεμονοδάσος* Pavlos goes to the archaeological site of Delphi and the narrator of *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* visits a Minoan city.<sup>365</sup> They both ask everyday people about the ancient sites and prompted by the answers that they receive they contemplate the past and its relation to the present. In *Λεμονοδάσος* the maid says to Pavlos that she sees the ancient Greeks as having no particular differences from the people of other periods apart from the fact that they were wanton: "Εγώ δεν ξέρω γράμματα, μου λέει στο τέλος. Φαντάζομαι πως ζούσαν όπως κι' εμείς, μόνο σαν πιο ξετσίπωτα".<sup>366</sup> Her answer makes Pavlos observe the endurance of the spirit of the ancients even after their death: "Ζούσαν -αυτό ήθελα ν' ακούσω. Ζούσαν, και το πνεύμα τους ακόμα ζει [...]".<sup>367</sup> In *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά*, the narrator speaks with a shepherd who views the ancient past disparagingly, since the ancients are dead: "Θωρώ τ' αρχαία. -Κι ίντα καταλαβαίνεις; -Πράμα! -Πράμα κι εγώ. Αυτοί πεθάνανε, εμείς ζούμε".<sup>368</sup> The visit to ancient ruins makes the narrators contemplate on life and death. As Pavlos explains to Virgo in *Λεμονοδάσος*, the ruins are a symbol of life and its ephemeral character: "Όταν αρχίσετε να ζείτε, τότε θα καταλάβετε πως ό,τι βλέπετε τριγύρω σας είναι προορισμένο να χαθεί μια μέρα, πως ό,τι αγαπήσατε θα λείπει [...] ένα τέτοιο νόημα

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<sup>364</sup> Sikelianos 1966: 213-214.

<sup>365</sup> For the Minoans in the work of Kazantzakis see Beaton 2010: 10-13. Also see Beaton 2006: 183-196. For the reception of the Minoans in Kazantzakis and the 20<sup>th</sup> century literature and art see Ziolkowski 2008.

<sup>366</sup> K. Politis 1944: 16.

<sup>367</sup> K. Politis 1944: 16.

<sup>368</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 178.



μου φανερώνουν τα ερείπια που, καθώς λέτε, αναζητώ”.<sup>369</sup> The narrator in *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* while visiting the Minoan city contemplates the meaning of life and realises its fleeting nature: “η ζωή ετούτη είναι μοναδική για τον κάθε άνθρωπο, άλλη δεν έχει, ό,τι μπορείς να το χαρείς, εδώ θα το χαρείς, περνάει γρήγορα και δεν θα σου ξαναδοθεί, στην αιωνιότητα, άλλη ευκαιρία”.<sup>370</sup>

Kosmas Politis is one of the first Greek novelists who incorporated into his work the Minoan finds at Knossos, referring especially to the statue of the snake goddess. The statue of the snake goddess had been recently discovered by archaeologists. Arthur Evans published the artifacts that he found in the excavations at the palace of Knossos in Crete in the book *The Palace of Minos at Knossos* in volumes that were published from 1921 to 1935. The chapter on the statue of the snake goddess was included in the first volume of 1921.<sup>371</sup> In *Λεμονοδάσος* when Pavlos sees a girl resembling the Minoan statue of the snake goddess, he remarks: “Ψηλότερα, το ζιπούνι απόμεινε ξεκούμπωτο κι’ αφήνει ελεύθερο το γεμάτο στήθος που φουσκώνει το χοντρό πουκάμισο. Ένα μινωϊκό αγαλματάκι της Κνωσού”.<sup>372</sup> In *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά*, the snake goddess has a central role in the Minoan city that the narrator visits: “Και στην καρδιά της πολιτείας, εκεί που οι πέτρες χάμω είναι οι πιο φαγωμένες από τα πόδια των ανθρώπων, το ιερό της Μεγάλης θεάς, με τ’ ανοιχτά ξέχειλα στήθια και τα ιερά φίδια στα μπράτσα”.<sup>373</sup> The narrator links the widow after her death with the Minoan females in a mingling of the recent and distant past: “Ο καιρός είχε πάρει μέσα μου την αληθινή του ουσία· η χήρα σα να ’χε πεθάνει πριν από χιλιάδες χρόνια, κι οι κνωσαϊκές σγουρομάλλες κοπέλες

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<sup>369</sup> K. Politis 1944: 87.

<sup>370</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 179.

<sup>371</sup> See A. Evans 1921: 495-523.

<sup>372</sup> K. Politis 1944: 47.

<sup>373</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 177.

του αιγαίου πολιτισμού σα να 'χαν πεθάνει σήμερα το πρωί".<sup>374</sup> The narrator's investigation of the past and his origins corresponds to the narrator's exploration in the modernist novel by Kosmas Politis but whereas Pavlos seems unable to have a productive relationship with his home country and in his attempt to escape from it he meets with death, in Kazantzakis' novel the narrator's experience is more fruitful.

### *Conclusions*

It has been argued in this chapter that the intertextual technique of *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* is characterised by a merging of the folk tradition and Modern Greek literature. The novel is linked with folk poetry and at the same time with literary works of modernism such as the fiction of Kosmas Politis. Through this integration, the components of several genres, periods and movements interact. There is an incorporation of cultural material from the folk tradition with quotations, allusions and references to folk songs that belong to the Akritic cycle as well as *παραλογές*, *κλέφτικα*, and *μοιρολόγια*. Direct references of the narrator to the folk songs and their function draw attention to them and illustrate their pivotal place in the novel as they shed light on the course of the characters in the unfolding of the plot as in the case of Stavridakis. Zorbas is linked with Myrivilis' novella *Ο Βασίλης ο Αρβανίτης*, which also bears folkloric elements and hails a popular hero. At the same time the two heroes exhibit a revisionary and unconventional attitude as they develop their views on the nation, religion, music and freedom but Zorbas diverges from him at the end. The folk elements are renewed and revised in their presentation through an individual writer's outlook. The unnamed narrator in *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη*

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<sup>374</sup> Kazantzakis 2010a: 256.

*Ζορμπά* is connected with other narrators and storytellers as in *Το μόνον της ζωής του ταξείδιον* and *Λεμονοδάσος*. The depiction of himself is placed among previous narrators of the literary tradition exploring the past, the surrounding space, the writer's relation with people and his poetics. In this way, the narrative that the narrator produced after the journey for the exploration of his identity is inseparable from the exploration of the cultural tradition.

### 3. Intertextuality as recurrence: *Christ Recrucified*

In *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* the connections that are made with Modern Greek literature underscore the concept of repetition. This notion is introduced already in the title and permeates the entire novel, which does not only develop the theme of the crucifixion of Christ but more essentially the idea of re-crucifixion. It is not treated as a unique phenomenon but as a perpetual recurrence. The goal of Manolios in the development of the plot is not to exhibit his individuality but on the contrary to fit himself into the reenactment of the Christian myth. This chapter aims to show that the novel is intertextually connected with works that extend the concept of repetition. The chapter is divided into sections examining the interaction with ethnography, Greek folk songs, and with Sikelianos' play *Ο Χριστός στη Ρώμη*. The feature of repetition is an integral part of intertextuality since it entails the process of replication of textual material from a previous work in another. What is more, the intertexts of the novel emphasise the idea of perpetuation even more either because they illustrate the repetition of events in history or because this concept is being developed thematically.

#### *Ethnography*

An important notion that is explored in *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* concerns the formation of a person's identity among the society in which the person lives. In the development of the formulation of the identity among the community the

characters of the novel are connected with ethnography. Kazantzakis' novels have been read as a revival of the ethnography of the 1880-1910 period. Henri Tonnet observes: “Γενικά, το μυθιστόρημα του Καζαντζάκη είναι ένα μεγάλο ηθογραφικό διήγημα”.<sup>375</sup> Kazantzakis' novels are related to ethnographic short stories on the grounds that the narrative space is set in the countryside and the people and customs of the village are presented with realism.<sup>376</sup> However, the aim of ethnography is not limited to depicting an idyllic love or a realistic picture of the countryside. Another important aspect of ethnography is the criticism of the flaws of society. The strong social criticism and the themes of violence and extreme behaviour link the novel with the fiction of Andreas Karkavitsas and Konstandinos Theotokis. Near the end of Karkavitsas' *Ο Ζητιάνος* the death of Kroustallo takes place while the beggar who is responsible for her death is not arrested by the police. The image of the dead Kroustallo is given with raw realism. The description of her dead body has connotations of crucifixion (“τα χέρια της σταυρωμένα”)<sup>377</sup> suggesting that her suicide constitutes a self-sacrifice. In *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* at the climax of the novel Manolios proceeds to his self-sacrifice and his murder also recalls a crucifixion: “Είχε ακόμα ανοιχτά τα μπράτσα, σα σταυρωμένος”.<sup>378</sup> The details in the description of Manolios' death are characterised by raw realism that is analogous to the ethnographic style of Karkavitsas:

Μα το πλήθος είχε κιόλα χιμήξει απάνω στο Μανολιό· τινάχτηκε το αίμα, ράντισε τα πρόσωπα, δυο τρεις στάλες έπεσαν ζεστές, αρμυρές στα χείλια του παπα-Γρηγόρη [...] Κι ολούθε έτρεχαν από πλήθος μαχαιριές τα αίματα. Οσμίστηκε το αίμα ο λαός, έπεσε απάνω στο κορμί που σπαρταρούσε· ο γερο-Λαδάς είχε κολλήσει το

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<sup>375</sup> Tonnet 1999: 278.

<sup>376</sup> See the section “Ο Ζορμπάς και η αναβίωση της ηθογραφίας” in Beaton 2009: 31-41. Also see Meraklis 1977a: 61-66.

<sup>377</sup> Karkavitsas 1989: 198.

<sup>378</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 447.

φαφούτικο στόμα στο λαιμό του Μανολιού και πολεμούσε, λυσσασμένος, να του κόψει ένα κομμάτι κρέας.<sup>379</sup>

Here an image of cannibalism is presented as the people attempt to eat the flesh of Manolios and drink his blood. The image also has symbolic connotations as in the Eucharist the consumption of bread and wine symbolises the reception of Christ's blood and body.

Other links to ethnography are detected in the development of the characters. *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* is connected with Kondylakis' *Ο Πατούχας* in the description of the bucolic life on the mountain, the name of the character and also his relationship with Lenio and the widow. In *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* the protagonist is called Manolios or Christ according to the biblical character that he represents. The protagonist of Kondylakis' novella *Ο Πατούχας* is also named Manolios or Manolis and also Patouchas. The two characters have a double role which is evident from the two names that they bear. In Kondylakis' novella the protagonist's nickname derives from the large physical characteristics that he has but it becomes a burden for him to be called Patouchas. In Kazantzakis' novel the protagonist is also named Christ, which is the role that his fellow villagers have given him in the performance of the passion of Christ. Patouchas also struggles to live up to the expectations that his circle has from him and he succeeds at the end, but the procedure is likewise arduous for him. Their endeavour to discover themselves through their identification to the way that society views them is reflected in the titles of the texts. The titles do not include their name, Manolios, but the nicknames that their fellow villagers have given them: *Ο Πατούχας* and *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται*.

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<sup>379</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 447.

In the first part of Kondylakis' novella, Patouchas leaves the village and lives on the mountain as a shepherd. Unable to fit into the human society he feels free on the mountain and it becomes easier for him to communicate with the sheep than with people. The narrator notes about Patouchas: “οι μόνοι άνθρωποι τους οποίους δεν εφοβείτο ήσαν οι σύντροφοί του, ποιμένες και τυροκόμοι, ημίαγροι, ως αυτός”.<sup>380</sup> In *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* when Manolios returns to the mountain from the village he has the following dialogue with Nikolios: “-Σου ’καμαν κακό οι άνθρωποι εκεί κάτω; -Ναι. -Γιατί πήγες;”.<sup>381</sup> The fact that Patouchas and Nikolios are closer to their sheep than to human beings is reflected in their relationship with women. This element connects the novel with the work of Kondylakis and is also comparable to the ethnography of Papadiamandis as for instance in the short story *Όνειρο στο κύμα* where the narrator interrelates his goats and the woman. In Kondylakis' novella, while Patouchas observes the goats he wishes to be one of them: “Από του τράγου δε το βλέμμα του κατέβαιναν εις τας αίγας, αίτινες με προσπάθειαν τινα ερωτοτροπίας ανέτεινον προς τον σουλτάνον εκείνον τους ηλιθίους οφθαλμούς των. Και νέος στεναγμός συνώδευε την σκέψιν του νέου. Διατί να μη είνε και αυτός τράγος;”.<sup>382</sup> In *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* in Nikolios' mind the goat is identified with Lenio: “Το Νικολιό όλο και συλλογίζονταν με θυμό το δυνατό κριάρι και το Λενιό, έσμιγαν αξεδιάλυτα μέσα στο νου του ο μπροσταρόκριος κι η στρουμπουλή γυναικούλα, γίνονταν ένα, και τότε το Λενιό ήταν από πάνω καβάλα, τότε από κάτω και γελούσε...”.<sup>383</sup> Nikolios abandons his former life on the mountain so as to marry Lenio. For Nikolios like Patouchas women constitute the reason why they decide to depart from the secluded life on the mountain and live among the villagers.

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<sup>380</sup> Kondylakis 1993: 60.

<sup>381</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 101.

<sup>382</sup> Kondylakis 1993: 65.

<sup>383</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 112.

The same metaphor is developed in the depiction of women since in both texts they are viewed as demons. When Patouchas tries to seek information about the nature of women he receives the answer that they are demons and as the narrator explains, Patouchas would welcome them with contentment: “Μήπως και αυτός δεν θα επροτίμα ένα δαίμονα από όλα τα αγαθά του κόσμου; [...] Ήρθε να βρη το δαίμονά του. Θέλει κι αυτός ένα δαίμονα”.<sup>384</sup> In *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* women and demons intermingle. Manolios’ face swells while he is planning to visit the house of Katerina, the widow. When he wonders what has happened to him, Nikolios explains that it has been caused to him by the demon and Manolios agrees: “Είναι ο δαίμονας, Γιαννακό, καλά το βρήκες’ ο δαίμονας, και με καβάλησε’ δόξα σοι ο Θεός, αλλιώς ήμουν χαμένος...”.<sup>385</sup> According to him God cannot be separated from the demon: “Δεν μπορείς να ξεχωρίσεις το Θεό από το δαίμονα... Πολλές φορές - μνήστητί μου, Κύριε! -έχουν τα ίδια μούτρα!”.<sup>386</sup>

The relationship of Patouchas and Manolios with women is instrumental for the fashioning of their own identity within the society. Patouchas abandons the mountain and stays in the community of the village because of Pigi. At the end of the novella after rejecting the widow he decides to marry Pigi. Manolios, on the other hand, follows the opposite route. The role of Christ is incompatible with a wedding with Lenio. Although he was engaged to her at the beginning of the novel, after he talks to the widow he decides not to marry Lenio.<sup>387</sup> The widow helps him accomplish his duty to sacrifice himself for people and undertake the role of Christ. In this process the widow saves Manolios: “-Βόηθα με, Κατερίνα, είπε παρακλητικά, βόηθα

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<sup>384</sup> Kondylakis 1993: 69.

<sup>385</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 132.

<sup>386</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 132.

<sup>387</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 87.



με να σωθώ...”.<sup>388</sup> The widow also considers herself saved by Manolios as she confesses to him: “-Εσύ, χωρίς να το ξέρεις, χωρίς να το θες, χωρίς κι εγώ να το θέλω, είσαι η σωτηρία μου...”.<sup>389</sup> In this way their relationship is presented as complementary and reciprocal. As Patouchas and Manolios gradually intermingle with the society of the village conforming to it or challenging it, they finally form their identity.

Kondylakis’ novella *Η πρώτη αγάπη* (1919) recounts the unfulfilled love of two young people. In *Η πρώτη αγάπη* the development of the love story in the narration is based on the symbols of heat and cold, which reflect the lovers’ feelings and the condition of their relationship. At the beginning of the story the heroine is characterised by her *πυρωμάδα*.<sup>390</sup> Apart from her behaviour it is also her physical appearance that manifests her warm feelings. This changes when the narrator leaves the village. At this stage the heat is replaced by cold. The physical condition of the two characters becomes frail. At the end of the story the heroine is presented as warm again but this time her heat stems from the fever of her illness (“πραγματικώς το χέρι της έκαie τώρα περισσότερο και τα μάγουλά της ήτανε φωτιά”<sup>391</sup>). Finally, she acquires the light of a halo before her death (“[...] τώρα το φως του ήλιου κύκλωνε το πρόσωπό της με φωτοστέφανο αγίας”).<sup>392</sup>

In *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* the imagery of warmth and cold is employed as a metaphor that represents the love story of Michelis and Mariori. Like the heroine of Kondylakis story, Mariori is initially characterised by warmth (“[Ο Μιχελής]

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<sup>388</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 161.

<sup>389</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 160.

<sup>390</sup> Kondylakis 1993: 293.

<sup>391</sup> Kondylakis 1993: 313.

<sup>392</sup> Kondylakis 1993: 315.

είχε αγγίξει τώρα να το χέρι της Μαριορής κι ακόμα αποκρατούσε τη φλόγα”).<sup>393</sup>

However, as Michelis leaves so as to aid the refugees of Sarakina, her warmth stems from her illness (“Δυο γαλάζιοι κύκλοι έζωναν τα μαύρα αμυγδαλάτα της μάτια και τα χείλια της έκαιγαν”).<sup>394</sup> Moreover, Manolios seems to undergo the same stages, namely from the warmth<sup>395</sup> to cold<sup>396</sup> and finally to the light of a halo making him resemble a saint (“είδα γύρα τριγύρα από το πρόσωπό του μια παράξενη λάμψη· ένα στεφάνι φως· όπως έχουν οι άγιοι στα κονίσματα...”).<sup>397</sup>

Overall, *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* presents a multilevel relation to ethnography which is detected in the narrative space but also in the depiction of the development of the characters and the relationships within the society of the village. The novel is set on the Greek periphery but does not offer an idealised image of it. It emphasises the good types of the characters and their negative aspects depicting violence and injustice with realism.

#### *Greek folk poetry and the repetitions of history*

The story of the novel bears connections with the historical time when it was written. An important part of it revolves around the endeavour of a group of Greeks who have been persecuted by the Turks to settle down at Lykovrisi and while Manolios, the protagonist of the novel, is trying to support them he is finally killed by his fellow villagers. This civil riot may reflect the civil war that was raging in Greece in 1948 when Kazantzakis wrote the novel. The narrative time of *Ο Χριστός*

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<sup>393</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 23.

<sup>394</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 62.

<sup>395</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 85.

<sup>396</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 102.

<sup>397</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 265.

*Ξανασταυρώνεται* is set shortly before the Greek defeat by the Turks in 1922. The historical event of the Asia Minor catastrophe is connected with previous periods of Greek history that have been marked by the battles against the Ottomans. In this way they illustrate the cyclical character of historical events and the people's perpetual state of suffering and longing for freedom.

The refugees' descriptions regarding their struggle and aspirations about the future evoke the legends of the folk tradition after the fall of Constantinople. A common motif of folk poetry is the presence of birds. In the folk songs birds appear at critical moments. They are personified and they convey messages through speech. The folk song "Το κρούσος της Αντριάνοπολης" recounts the siege of 1361 by Amourat. The birds participate in the mourning for the loss of the city:

Ταηδόνια της Ανατολής και τα πουλιά της Δύσης  
κλαίγουν αργά, κλαίγουν ταχιά, κλαίγουν το μεσημέρι  
κλαίγουν την Αντριάνοπολη την πολυκρουσεμένη (1-3)<sup>398</sup>

In order to express the magnitude of the catastrophe the birds from the East to the West are presented to cry for the siege of the city. The folk song "Της Πάργας" also contains the motif of the personification of birds who mourn for the loss of the city. The imagery of the birds can be detected in Kazantzakis' novel when the refugees narrate their struggles: "Δυο κουκουβάγιες τρόμαξαν, κουφοπέταξαν από τον πλάτανο και χάθηκαν στο σκοτάδι".<sup>399</sup> The specification of the number of the birds and also the juxtaposition of three verbs in the sentence evoke the style of folk poetry. The fear of the refugees who wander and try to find a land to settle down is reflected in the fear of the owls that seem to sympathise with the humans. Moreover,

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<sup>398</sup> N. G. Politis: 1914: 3, nr 1.

<sup>399</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 36.

the image of the refugees who carry the bones of their ancestors is also found in the folk song “Της Πάργας”:

σκάψτε πλατιά, σκάψτε βαθιά, όλα σας τα κιβούρια,

και ταντρειωμένα κόκκαλα, ξεθάψτε του γονιού σας.

Τούρκους δεν προσκύνησαν, Τούρκοι μην τα πατήσουν. (14-16)<sup>400</sup>

In “Το κρούσος της Αντριάνοπολης” the tragic element is aggrandised by the time when the siege is set, namely at the Christian ceremony of the Easter. According to N. G. Politis the line “και της Λαμπρής την Κυριακή για το Χριστός Ανέστη” is explained by the fact that the siege of the city coincided with Holy Week: “Η άλωση της Αδριανουπόλεως υπό των Βουλγάρων τω 1205 έγινε την εβδομάδα του Πάσχα”.<sup>401</sup> In *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται*, when the refugees arrive at Lykovrisi after losing their land, the resurrection of Christ has just been celebrated. The time when the refugees appear in Kazantzakis’ novel is connected with the tradition that is encapsulated in this folk song suggesting the repetition of historical events.

The threat of the siege to the cultural and religious tradition is reflected in the folk song “Της Αγιά Σοφιάς”. The song recounts the last mass of the cathedral of Hagia Sophia which remained unfinished due to the siege of Constantinople by the Turks.<sup>402</sup> At the loss of Constantinople, which was the political and the religious centre of the empire, the icons are involved in the event and produce tears. They are personified and they display human reactions:

Η Δέσποινα τaráχτηκε, κ’ εδάκρυσαν οι εικόνες.

«Σώπασε, κυρα Δέσποινα, και μη πολυδακρύζης,

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<sup>400</sup> N. G. Politis 1914: 14, nr 9, B’.

<sup>401</sup> N. G. Politis 1914: 3, nr 1.

<sup>402</sup> See Beaton 1980: 95-102.

πάλι με χρόνους, με καιρούς, πάλι δικά σας είναι». (16-18)<sup>403</sup>

In this image, which combines personification with the supernatural element, the hopes of the Greeks to recapture the lost land are expressed. In *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* Photis, the priest of Sarakina, in his recounting of the moments when the Turks attacked his village refers to the icons of the church and notes his initial indignation that the icon of Saint Elias did not react immediately to the misfortunes of the Greeks. Photis uses direct questions that begin with the device of repetition of *Δε θα*, a technique that is characteristic in folk poetry. He cannot conceive that the icon remains indifferent to the people's misfortunes. He wonders: “Δε θα σπάσει η καρδιά του; Πως μπορεί και χωράει τόσον πόνο; τόση αδικία, τόση αναίδεια; Δε θα πεταχτεί από το κόνισμα;”.<sup>404</sup> In his imagination, as the threefold repetition of *σα να* suggests, the icon's figures begin to move and talk: “σα να με κλότσησε το κόνισμα, σα να ζωντάνεψαν τα τέσσερα πύρινα άλογα, σα να κουνήθηκαν τα χείλια του Προφήτη κι άκουσα φωνή μεγάλη: «Πάμε!»”.<sup>405</sup>

In the folk song “Της Αγιά Σοφιάς” a supernatural voice is heard from heaven. It informs the Christians that the loss of the city is the will of God and it advises them to stop the mass:

φωνή τους ήρθε εξ ουρανού κι' απ' αρχαγγέλου στόμα.

«Πάψετε το χερουβικό κι' ας χαμηλώσουν τ' άγια,

παπάδες πάρτε τα γιερά, και σεις κεριά σβηστήτε,

γιατί είναι θέλημα Θεού η Πόλη να τουρκέψη. [...] (8-11)<sup>406</sup>

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<sup>403</sup> N. G. Politis 1914: 5, nr 2.

<sup>404</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 405.

<sup>405</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 405.

<sup>406</sup> N. G. Politis 1914: 4, nr 2.

In his description of the last moments before the Turks attack his village Photis mentions that a disembodied voice was heard originating from the sky: “-Μια μέρα ακούστηκε φωνή απάνω από τις στέγες του χωριού μας”.<sup>407</sup> The connection with folk poetry is also achieved by the style of the sentence’s composition. The phrase “μια μέρα ακούστηκε φωνή” constitutes an eight-syllable line in iambic rhythm, the metre in which folk poetry is written. Although it is part of a prose text, it demonstrates the rhythm of a folk song.

The scene begins with a reversal of the events narrated in “Της Αγιά Σοφιάς”. While the people of Constantinople are warned by the supernatural voice that the city is going to fall and that the mass should stop, the villagers mistakenly think that they are going to be liberated. They are depicted as doing the things that the voice in the folk song advises the people against. They ring the bells cheerfully and light their lamps: “Χτυπήστε τις καμπάνες της Λαμπρής [...] κι άναβαν τα καντήλια στους σταυρούς”.<sup>408</sup> They also seem to believe that the legends that are recorded in the tradition of the folk songs after the Fall of Constantinople come alive. For instance, in another folk song it is described that the City will be recaptured when the heaven and earth unite their power:

Θέλ’ απ’ ουρανού μάστοραν και από την γην αργάτεν (11)<sup>409</sup>

Photis’ words seem to be embracing this tradition when he states: “Έφτασαν οι Έλληνες, γης κι ουρανός σμίγουν”.<sup>410</sup> He views the Greek army as the heroes who with heaven’s aid will drive the Turks away thereby expressing the ideology reflected in the folk song.

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<sup>407</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 44.

<sup>408</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 44.

<sup>409</sup> N. G. Politis 1914: 265, nr 5, B’.

<sup>410</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 44.

One more belief that Photis expresses from the folk tradition is the expulsion of the Turks to Kokkini Milia. When the Greek army is expected to arrive he says: “πάρτε, γυναίκες κι άντρες, τ’ άρματα, να κυνηγήσουμε τον Τούρκο ως την Κόκκινη Μηλιά!”.<sup>411</sup> While they are settling down in Sarakina, Photis expresses with certainty the view that Konstandinos Palaiologos will convey the news of the recapture of Constantinople: “[...] εδώ θα χτίσουμε, αδέρφια, την Πόρτα του Κωνσταντίνου του Παλαιολόγου! Από δω μια μέρα, παιδιά μου, σίγουρα, θα μπει, μουσκεμένος στον ιδρώτα, ο πεζοπόρος και θα φωνάζει: «Αδέρφια, πήραμε την Πόλη!»”.<sup>412</sup>

The hope that the homeland will be won back is reflected in the myth of the last emperor who was turned into marble. Vizyinos’ poem “Ο τελευταίος Παλαιολόγος” depicts the way that the legend is conveyed from one generation to another. A grandmother explains to her grandson that the last emperor is sleeping:

-Απέθανε, γιαγιά; Ποτέ, παιδάκι μου! Κοιμάται,  
κοιμάται μόνο! [...] (25-26)<sup>413</sup>

The grandmother also explains that when the right time comes Palaiologos will wake up and set the empire free:

Και χτύπα χτύπα, θα τον πα μακρά να τον πετάξει,  
πίσω στην Κόκκινη Μηλιά, και πίσ’ από τον ήλιο,  
που πια να μη γυρίση! (106-108)<sup>414</sup>

In Kazantzakis’ novel the events of this myth are reversed. The hopes of Photis for freedom prove delusive, since the Turks finally invade their village. When he and the refugees arrive at Lykovrisi, they wait for the elder of the village to wake

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<sup>411</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 44.

<sup>412</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 94.

<sup>413</sup> Vizyinos 2003: 386.

<sup>414</sup> Vizyinos 2003: 388.

up and help them. He is, however, in a state of deep slumber due to excessive eating and drinking: “-Κοιμάται, ροχαλίζει, δεν μπόρεσα να τον ξυπνήσω, είπε με σιγανή φωνή. Παράπτε, παράφασε, τον κούνησα, δεν κουνιόταν, του φώναξα, δεν άκουγε κι έφυγα”.<sup>415</sup> Whereas they were expecting Palaiologos to wake up and free them, they end up waiting for the drunk Patriarcheas to wake up.

The view and ideology of the folk tradition is held by the characters but does not seem compatible with the present. At the end of the novel Manolios is murdered by his compatriots. In his final words he refers to the myth of Palaiologos: “διώχτε τον τύραννο ως την Κόκκινη Μηλιά κι ακόμα... Μα δεν πρόλαβε ο Μανολιός να τελέψει”.<sup>416</sup> At the end of the novel the Ottoman troops are about to invade the village. As Manolios’ words are uttered shortly before his death they may also reflect the end of the great idea that was conveyed through them.

The speech of the teacher that refers to the Greek glory of the past is undermined by the narrator. The teacher of the village offers a eulogy for Patriarcheas hailing the Greek race from ancient times to the present. He concludes his speech with a quotation from the folk song “Της Αγιά Σοφιάς”:

Άρχισε από την αρχαία Ελλάδα, από το Μιλτιάδη και το Θεμιστοκλή και τους Περσικούς πολέμους κι ύστερα κατέβηκε στο Μέγα Αλέξαντρο και στα χρόνια του Χριστού, πήρε σβάρνα τη Βυζαντινή Αυτοκρατορία, στάθηκε πολλήν ώρα στην Αγιά Σοφιά και στο Βουλγαροχτόνο κι έφτασε αναστατωμένος, μουσκίδι στον ιδρώτα, στο πάρσιμο της Πόλης εκεί πια δεν μπόρεσε να κρατήσει το θρήνο... Κι όλος ο λαός βούιξε, όταν τον άκουσε να φωνάζει έξαλλος: «Πάλι με χρόνια με καιρούς, πάλι δική μας θα ’ναι!’.<sup>417</sup>

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<sup>415</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 40.

<sup>416</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 443.

<sup>417</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 322.



The phrase “πάλι δική μας θα ’ναι” from the folk song is contained in Kazantzakis’ novel. The collection of N. G. Politis includes the form “δικά σας”:

Πάλι με χρόνους, με καιρούς, πάλι δικά σας είναι. (18)<sup>418</sup>

The change from *δικά σας* in Politis’ collection to *δική μας* stems from the fact that the phrase appears on its own in the novel in the words of the teacher. According to Michael Herzfeld: “Yours” is what Politis’ sources mostly give, and “yours” is what every responsible reprinting of the complete text (including Politis’ own) provides, but “ours” is commonly substituted whenever the two lines (or just the second one) appear on their own, out of context”.<sup>419</sup> The phrase “πάλι δική μας θα ’ναι” in first plural expresses a collective view regarding liberation.<sup>420</sup>

The teacher emphasises the connection of Byzantine culture with the ancient and Modern Greek and concludes his speech with a quotation from Solomos’ *Ύμνος εις την ελευθερίαν*:

Και γρήγορα, άγαρμπα, μα θαρραλέα, μεταπήδησε στο εγκώμιο της ελληνικής φυλής, έσμιξε τον Προφήτη Ηλία με τον Απόλλωνα, ύστερα με το φως και τέλος με τον αθάνατο νου των Ελλήνων, που πολέμησαν και κατατρόπωσαν τα σκοτάδια των βαρβάρων. “Ηρθε ύστερα, μα με τρόπο, και στην Τουρκιά, τα μάσησε λίγο, μα ξαφνικά του ξέφυγε το χαλινάρι, αμολήθηκε ακαπίστρωτος κι άρχισε ξεκρέμαστα να τραγουδάει τον Ύμνο. Τα σάστισαν όλοι, άναψαν τα αίματά τους, κι άρχισαν κι αυτοί συνεπαρμένοι να τραγουδούν με συγκίνηση και με ηρωικές παραφωνίες: «Σε γνωρίζω από την κόψη του σπαθιού την τρομερή...».<sup>421</sup>

Earlier in the novel, the Greeks of Lykovrisi also sing the Greek national anthem.<sup>422</sup> The statement of the teacher is placed in the context of the narrator’s

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<sup>418</sup> N. G. Politis 1914: 5, nr 2.

<sup>419</sup> Herzfeld 1986: 131-132.

<sup>420</sup> Herzfeld 1986: 133.

<sup>421</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 270.

<sup>422</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 45.

words (“άγαρμπα”, “τα μάσησε”) which stress the exaggerated gestures and words of the teacher (“αναστατωμένος”, “μουσκίδι στον ιδρώτα”, “έξαλλος”). The perspective of the narrator does not coincide with that of the character whose words are conveyed through indirect speech. The third-person, omniscient narrator is not neutral and his mood in this case conveys an ironic perspective. By stressing the emotionality and exaggeration of the teacher’s speech the narrator alerts the reader to his distance from the character’s words. While the characters consciously repeat lines from the folk songs of the fall of Constantinople hoping to have a different fate to that of the Greeks of 1453, they have not yet realised that Asia Minor would be lost shortly after the narrative time of the novel. In the context of the novel the traditional, oral material is revised and reinterpreted.

#### *Sikelianos’ “Ο Χριστός στη Πώμη”*

The social activity of Manolios in *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* revolves around his acts to aid the refugees of Sarakina and gradually causes a revolt of the poor against the rich. Moreover, due to the participation in the performance of the passion of Christ he tries to reproduce through art and life the course taken by Christ towards crucifixion. The story line of *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* is connected with the play by Angelos Sikelianos *Ο Χριστός στη Πώμη*.<sup>423</sup> Sikelianos’ play was published in 1946, namely two years before *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* was written. The title of Kazantzakis’ novel alludes to the title of Sikelianos’ play through a partial reproduction of it as the words *Ο Χριστός* is repeated (*Ο Χριστός στη Πώμη-Ο Χριστός*

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<sup>423</sup> Kastrinaki 2002: 348-366. For the representation of Christ in the Greek literature of the 1940s also see Kastrinaki 2005: 255-260. On the literary representation of Christ in worldwide literature see Ziolkowski 1972.

Ξανασταυρώνεται). The two main points that are in common in Sikelianos' and Kazantzakis' works pertain to the imitation of a theatrical performance of Christ's passion in real life and also the social revolt of the poor against the rich.<sup>424</sup> Prochoros, who aims at the rebellion of the poor people against the rich, has organised a reenactment of Christ's crucifixion while at the same time a group of Hebrews is preparing a revolution. Peter says that he saw Christ alive telling him that his place is on earth to fight injustice. Manain has organised a large fire which burns Rome and at the end Peter is arrested and Prochoros is killed.

In *Ο Χριστός στη Ρώμη* the depiction of the injustice of Rome's social stratification is evident from the beginning of the play. The people of Rome are presented as poor and lacking food and shelter. They and their children are at the threshold of death asking the more privileged people and their rulers to provide them with the basic necessities of life:

-Ψωμί!... Θροφή!... και δε ζητάμε τίποτ' άλλο!...

-Ψωμί, ψωμί, να μην πεθάνουν τα παιδιά μας!

-Ψωμί και κρέας, για να ντυθούνε τα πλευρά μας!...

-Ψωμί και κρέας, να σκεπαστούν τα κόκαλά μας... (1432-1435)<sup>425</sup>

The rulers, however, are indifferent to the plight of the people and thus Prochoros attempts to organise a civil revolt so that the underprivileged citizens may make their demands and promote their rights. Prochoros is finally killed by the guards and in his last words he expresses his ideas on life, freedom and death:

Μα εγώ το λαό να τον σηκώσω θέλω, απάνω

κι από τους πλούσιους κι απάνω απ' τους αρχόντους,

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<sup>424</sup> Kastrinaki 2002: 359.

<sup>425</sup> Sikelianos 1971: 164-165.

έτοιμο πάντα για τη λεύτερη ανάσα,  
για τον παλμό, για το ρυθμό, για τ' ανηφόρι,  
για τη ζωή και για το θάνατο... (449-453)<sup>426</sup>

In the novel the refugees of Sarakina are in desperate need for food and shelter. When, however, they explain their wretched conditions to the rich and powerful citizens of Lykovrisi, the latter prefer to preserve their property instead of providing aid to the refugees. While the condition of the people of Sarakina deteriorates, Manolios and his followers endorse more actively their rights and freedom. Manolios' social ideology triggers a revolution in the village and his rich fellow villagers as well as the Turk ruler against him. When he finally realises that he is unable to change the established social order, he tries to disseminate the idea of freedom before his death: "Στέκουμαι το λοιπόν ανάμεσα στη Λυκόβρυση και στη Σαρακήνα και φωνάζω: Σηκωθείτε, αδέρφια, στ' άρματα, παιδιά, ως πότε θα 'μαστε σκλάβοι; [...] Εμπρός, ήρθε ο καιρός, ελευτερία ή θάνατος!"<sup>427</sup>

A main notion in both Kazantzakis' novel and Sikelianos' play is the concept of continuation and recurrence. The death of Christ is reenacted in both works. This reiteration goes even further, in that Manolios also recalls the actor who impersonated Christ in an earlier dramatic performance in Lykovrisi. The previous actor had been unable to continue living the life that he had before undertaking the role of Christ:

Την περασμένη φορά, θυμάστε, αυτός που έκανε το Χριστό ήταν ο μαστρο-Χαραλάμης, άνθρωπος νοικοκύρης και καλός φαμελίτης· μα τόσο πάσκιζε ν' ακολουθήσει τ' αγνάρια του Χριστού, τόσο αγωνίστηκε ολάκερο το χρόνο να γίνει άξιος να σηκώσει το σταυρό, που στο τέλος το μυαλό του σάλεψε· και την ίδια μέρα της Λαμπρής έβαλε το ακάνθινο στεφάνι, πήρε στον ώμο του το σταυρό, παράτησε τα πάντα και πήγε στο μοναστήρι του Αι-Γιώργη του Σουμελά, πέρα στην

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<sup>426</sup> Sikelianos 1971: 106.

<sup>427</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 443.

Τραπεζούντα, και καλογέρεψε. Κι η φαμίλια του ρήμαξε, πέθανε η γυναίκα του, και τα παιδιά του γυρίζουν τώρα στο χωριό και ζητιανεύουν.<sup>428</sup>

Manolios does not just repeat the story of Christ. He repeats a never-ending repetition of the story of Christ. While Manolios consciously tries to repeat the story of the mythical character of Christ, he unconsciously engages in the repetition of previous literary characters that had already repeated the story of Christ. On an intra-textual level, Manolios repeats the story of the actor who has repeated the story of Christ. On an intertextual level, his story relates to Peter and Prochoros in *Ο Χριστός στη Ρώμη*. In Sikelianos' play the crucifixion of Christ constitutes an act of continuous repetition. It is emphasised that a long tradition of crucifixions has preceded the crucifixion of Christ:

Και μήπως τάχατε είν' ο μόνος σταυρωμένος;

Από το δέντρο του σταυρού, το λησμονάτε

πόσοι κρεμάστηκαν, πρωτύτερα από κείνον; (63-65)<sup>429</sup>

Sikelianos goes even further and adds that Christ when he was thought to have passed away after his crucifixion, reappears to Peter and declares that he wants to go to Rome and be crucified again:

Δεν άκουσα άλλο... Ετούτο μόνον,

αλίμονό μου! «Πέτρε, αν θέλεις τώρα, φύγε,

τι εγώ τραβάω, σ' το ξαναλέω, στη Ρώμη μέσα,

μια άλλη φορά να σταυρωθώ!» [...] (181-184)<sup>430</sup>

Τ' ακούτε, αδέρφια; Στην καινούρια σταύρωσή Του!...

Το βάνει ο νους Σας; Στην καινούρια σταύρωσή Του!... (1195-1196)<sup>431</sup>

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<sup>428</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 30-31.

<sup>429</sup> Sikelianos 1971: 90.

<sup>430</sup> Sikelianos 1971: 149.

Christ in Sikelianos' play is not only presented as repeating the crucifixions of the past but also his own crucifixion. The people who are informed about it by Peter foresee that it will also be repeated in the future, since what has happened once is going to reoccur:

Τίποτα, Πέτρε... Αυτό, που κάποτε έχει γίνει  
στον κόσμο τούτον, ημπορεί να ξαναγίνει.  
Τίποτα, Πέτρε. Να 'μαστε έτοιμοι, μονάχα,  
σαν έρτ' η ώρα το παλιό να ξαναγίνει... (1198-1201)<sup>432</sup>

Although both works develop the notion of the "re-crucifixion" of Christ, the reason that is put forward is different in the two texts. In *Ο Χριστός στη Ρώμη* Christ is presented as intending to be crucified again because he believes that his place is not in heaven but on earth. Christ prefers to have an active presence among the suffering people:

«Πέτρε, μ' ακούς; Εμένα η θέση μου δεν είναι  
στους ουρανούς, μα είναι στη γη κ' εδώ κοντά σας!...». (1167-1168)<sup>433</sup>

In Kazantzakis' novel *Photis* argues that one should actively participate in life: "Πιο εύκολο είναι να δώσεις τη ζωή σου μια και καλή, παρά να τη δίνεις στάλα στάλα στον καθημερινό αγώνα· αν ήταν να με ρωτούσαν ποιος δρόμος πάει στον ουρανό, θ' απαντούσα: ο πιο δύσκολος".<sup>434</sup> Manolios on the other hand considers death the ultimate self-sacrifice: "Δεν μπορούσε ακόμα να ξεχάσει τη θεϊκή χαρά του, όταν κίνησε να δώσει τη ζωή του· τούτη η αστραπή έμενε άσβεστη μέσα του και μακρινή πολύ, σα χαμένη Παράδεισο· κι ο καθημερινός αγώνας του φαίνονταν

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<sup>431</sup> Sikelianos 1971: 150.

<sup>432</sup> Sikelianos 1971: 150.

<sup>433</sup> Sikelianos 1971: 148.

<sup>434</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 365.

νωθρός πολύ, χωρίς λάμψη. Βιάζονται”.<sup>435</sup> In *Ο Χριστός στη Ρώμη* Peter is eager to die so as to meet Christ again. His dialogue with the Roman governor, who threatens to put him on the cross, is characteristic of Peter’s eagerness to die:

Αχ, μην αργείτε λοιπόν τότε, μην αργείτε!...

Ομπρός, σταυρώστε με [...] (1528-1529)<sup>436</sup>

Similarly, in his dialogue with Manolios the Turkish ruler forces him to talk about his social ideology. Like Peter, Manolios’ reaction is to urge the ruler to kill him as he crosses his hands: “[...] ο Μανολιός, άπλωσε σταυρωτά τα χέρια: -Σκοτώστε με... είπε”.<sup>437</sup>

Sikelianos’ play ends with a great conflagration of Rome, which is followed by the emergence of a new world for people. The oppressed people are finally victorious in *Ο Χριστός στη Ρώμη*. In *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται*, however, the claims of the poor are not fulfilled. The advent and departure of Photis and his followers from Lykovrisi are reminiscent of the beginning and ending of Sikelianos’ play. In *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* the approaching refugees are described as a group of ants: “-Κοιτάχτε... κοιτάχτε, βρε παιδιά! φώναξε ο Γιαννακός· τι ’ναι αυτή η μερμηγκιά που ξεπρόβαλε από τον κάμπο;”.<sup>438</sup> Similarly, in *Ο Χριστός στη Ρώμη* the people who arrive at Rome are depicted as ants:

Μα τ’ είν’ εκείνο που όλοι, λες πως το τραβάνε,

σαν τα μυρμήγκια στη φωλιά τους ένα ξύλο; (692-693)<sup>439</sup>

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<sup>435</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 365.

<sup>436</sup> Sikelianos 1971: 171.

<sup>437</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 446.

<sup>438</sup> Kazantzakis 2010c: 35.

<sup>439</sup> Sikelianos 1971: 118.

At the end of the novel Photis departs with his people towards the East like the people from all nations in *Ο Χριστός στη Πώμη* gather together and go to the New Jerusalem. Kazantzakis does not include the burning of Lykovrisi in the plot of the novel but as the story is placed on the eve of the Asia Minor catastrophe its subsequent fall to the Turks is foreshadowed.

### *Conclusions*

The connections with previous literature extend the concept of recurrence that is developed as a theme in the novel. Manolios' bucolic life on the mountain resembles the ethnographic depiction of the countryside in Kondylakis' stories and the form of his double name (Manolios-Christ) seems to reproduce that of Manolios-Patouchas. As the plot unfolds he attempts to reenact Christ in the play and he is actually killed sacrificing himself so as to save people. As a Christ figure he evokes Sikelianos' *Ο Χριστός στη Πώμη*, a play which also develops the theme of the perpetual character of Christ's crucifixion. Apart from the repetitive nature of the Christian myth, it is also history that has a repetitive dimension. The events of the novel are linked with events of previous periods of the Greek history through folk songs. Folk songs that revolve around the fall of Constantinople, are linked with the events of the novel that depict the misfortunes of Greek refugees in Anatolia. When the characters believe that they will have a different fate, the narrator presents their words and actions through a lens of irony which introduces a contradictory perspective.

In Lykovrisi the characters seem to be collectively influenced by the roles that they play in the performance of the passion of Christ. Manolios stands for Christ,



Katerina represents Magdalene and Panagiotaros plays Judas while the elders stand for the Pharisees. Therefore, what the protagonists are seeking is not to shape their own unique identity but to imitate the figures of the roles that they represent. On a “conscious” level they attempt to reenact figures of the Christian myth, while at the same time without realising it they reproduce material from earlier works. This “conscious” and “unconscious” reproduction suggests a double level of linking with previous figures and works underscoring the notion of recurrence in the theme as well as in the intertextual technique of the novel.

#### 4. Quotations and narrative allusions in *O Kapetan Michalis*

*O Kapetan Michalis* is characterised by a dense and rich network of intertexts that are detected in an increasing frequency. The words of the novel's characters, who are of an exceptionally large number in this novel, include quotations, namely repetitions of fragments from the textual material of anterior works.<sup>440</sup> Usually the quotations are explicit and they are indicated with quotation marks or visually in the form of italics. In parallel, the depiction of the characters' words, thoughts, and actions by the narrator contains allusions to previous literature. The allusions formulate an implicit, subtle interaction with other texts.

This chapter examines the presence and function of quotations and allusions in *O Kapetan Michalis*. The chapter is divided into two sections. First, the quotations that the characters say are explored examining the cases when the quotations are made and also the compatibility of the quotations with the cultural background of the characters who express them. The second section examines the narrative allusions. The markers that indicate the intertextual relationship are investigated such as key words, and parallels in the content, style and structure. This section comprises close readings that examine the allusions of the novel to previous works focusing on the characters of Thrasaki, Polyxenis and kapetan Michalis. In this way, the multifaceted intertextual nexus of *O Kapetan Michalis* will be examined.

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<sup>440</sup> Manousakis has observed an anthropological scale in the characters of Kazantzakis' novel which begins with a "subhuman" category (*homunculus*) and reaches the highest type of character that displays features of the *Übermensch*. See Manousakis 1980/1981: 66-102.

#### 4.1.1. CHARACTERS' QUOTATIONS

The action of *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* is set in Megalo Kastro, the modern Heraklion, and the narrative time is the year 1889. The novel recounts the events that escalated to that year's unsuccessful Cretan revolt against the Muslim Turks. In the narration literature is combined with history and also fiction is merged with autobiographical material.<sup>441</sup> Before the production of the novel there had been a tradition of narrations revolving around events from the history of Crete.<sup>442</sup> Heroic deeds and violent deaths during the revolutions had been recounted in the Cretan *ριζίτικα* and more particularly, in the heroic folk poetry of Crete. Moreover, before the production of *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* there was fiction pertaining to the Cretan history as for instance Spyridon Zabelios' *Κρητικοί Γάμοι* and also Prevelakis' *Παντέρμνη Κρήτη* and *Ο Κρητικός*.

In *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* in most cases, the characters draw material from the folk cultural tradition in the quotations that they make. When the characters quote verses from folk songs they are usually connected thematically with the scene in which they are found. For example, Tityros, the brother of kapetan Michalis, is a character who is a man of letters and during the unfolding of the plot he gradually develops into a man of action.<sup>443</sup> The crucial turning point for his transformation is when he kills Diamandis, the brother of his wife, after which he gradually acquires confidence. Before that turning point there are traces that manifest his ardent spirit.

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<sup>441</sup> Phanourakis has recorded real events and historical persons of Heraklion that are present in Kazantzakis' novel. See Phanourakis 1958: 184-199. For a study of the references to the historical places, events and persons that have been included in the novel see Detorakis 2010: 573-578.

<sup>442</sup> Kazantzakis wrote the novel *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* from December 1949 until July 1950. Prevelakis 1984a: 533-534.

<sup>443</sup> For the transformation of Tityros and Kosmas and for the relationship between genre and self-identity in Kazantzakis' novel, see Tziovas 2003: 153-174.

When he delivers a speech in the cathedral of Hagios Minas on 29 May for the commemoration of the fall of Constantinople, he quotes a line from the folk song of Hagia Sophia. Tityros' speech causes the unanimous participation of the audience:

Ο καπετάν Μιχάλης σφούγγιξε τα μάτια του, ξαφνικά είχαν θαμπώσει. Κοίταζε τον αδερφό του· πού τη βρήκε τόση φλόγα ο Τίτυρος; Πως χωρούσαν τα γυαλάκια αυτά και τα παντελονάκια κι η καμπουρίτσα τόση ψυχή; Κι όταν στράφηκε ο Τίτυρος στο κόνισμα της Παναγιάς στο τέμπλο κι άπλωσε τα χέρια και της φώναξε: «Μην κλαις, άγια Δέσποινα, μην κλαις, πάλι με χρόνια με καιρούς, πάλι δική μας θα 'ναι!» ο Μητροπολίτης άνοιξε τις αγκάλες κι έπεσε μέσα ο Τίτυρος κι έκλαιγαν κι οι δυο τους, σμάριασε γύρα τους ο λαός κι άρχισε κι αυτός το θρήνο.<sup>444</sup>

This passage contains a rare occasion where kapetan Michalis discerns an inflamed spirit in Tityros while listening to his words despite the fact that he is a man of action who denounces words. In chapter 3 we observed that the incorporation of the same folk song into *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* stresses the people's state of suffering and shows their hopes for liberation from the Turks while the narrator has an ironic distance from the views of the characters who do not know that the Asia Minor catastrophe is approaching. Here, the quotation from the folk song "Της Αγιά Σοφιάς" is compatible with the scenery in the church of Hagios Minas and the occasion of the commemoration of the fall of Constantinople. It reflects the compatibility of folk poetry with the events that the people are experiencing and it does not suggest an ironic distancing between the narrator and the characters.

A characteristic in the quotations that are present in *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* is that they are usually expressed in terms of song. Tityros refers to poems as songs when he talks to his students: "[...] να μάθετε να μου πείτε απόξω τα τρία τραγουδάκια: "Σε γνωρίζω από την κόψη...", "Εις το βουνό ψηλά εκεί..." και το "Ω λιγυρόν και

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<sup>444</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 243.

κοπτερόν σπαθί μου!”.<sup>445</sup> Moreover, the characters are described as singing lines from poems and folk songs. Thrasaki and his friends quote poems that they have learnt as they sing them: “[...] κινούσαν όλοι να ψέλνουν και να τραγουδούν ό,τι τους κατέβαινε, ανάκατα, ο ένας αμανέ κι ο άλλος μαντινάδες ή το Χριστός ανέστη ή τα τραγούδια που τους μάθαιναν στο σκολειό: «Εις το βουνό ψηλά εκεί –είναι εκκλησιά ερημική...» Ξεσήκωναν το σπίτι με τις φωνές, έμπαινε στο χορό κι ο γάιδαρος, άρχιζε κι αυτός να γκαρίζει”.<sup>446</sup> Barbagiannis causes the amusement of the Turkish pasha when he sings lines despite the provoking character of their content regarding the Turks: “[...] κι άξαφνα έσυρε μια φωνή στριγκιά κι άρχισε να τραγουδάει: «Ω λιγυρόν και κοπτερόν σπαθί μου... εσείς τον Τούρκον σφάξατε...». Χριστιανοί και Τούρκοι τα ’χασαν, δεν κάτεχαν τι να κάμουν, πώς να φερθούν, κοίταζαν τον πασά να πάρουν απ’ αυτόν αξαμάρι”.<sup>447</sup>

On another occasion, while the neighbours of kapetan Michalis talk, Katinitsa quotes a line from Kornaros’ *Ερωτόκριτος*. It is specified by the narrator that she is singing it: “-Τα ’μαθες, Αρετούσα μου, τα θλιβερά μαντάτα; άρχισε τραγουδιστά η Κατινίτσα”.<sup>448</sup> The quotation is a variation of line III 1355: “Λέει της ο Ρωτόκριτος, Έκουσες τα μαντάτα,”<sup>449</sup> with which Rotokritos begins his monologue to Aretousa when the king banished him from Athens so as to prevent her from marrying Rotokritos. This line is the beginning of a popular fragment that is regularly performed.<sup>450</sup> Fragment III 1355-1400 which is the “Farewell” and fragment V 883-958 which is the “Tale” that Rotokritos says to Aretousa in order to test her fidelity

<sup>445</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 513.

<sup>446</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 296.

<sup>447</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 175.

<sup>448</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 83-84.

<sup>449</sup> Kornaros 1915: 221.

<sup>450</sup> For the adaptations of *Ερωτόκριτος* into music see Durán 1981: 279-299.

are the most regularly performed segments from *Ερωτόκριτος*. Here the quotation shows the widespread appearance of *Ερωτόκριτος* as a song in Cretan life.<sup>451</sup>

The setting of poetry to music has the effect of its wide spreading among people. The patriotic verses of Rigas Velestinlis are quoted by Trialonis. Rigas had written revolutionary songs and was executed by the Turks. Trialonis makes a quotation from the famous beginning of Rigas' *Θούριος* and the narrator explains how this character became acquainted with this kind of poetry. He is a character whose source of courage in the battle is believed to be the sacred wood that he carries with him.<sup>452</sup> Trialonis quotes Rigas' lines in support of his view that the Cretans should proceed to a revolt against the Turks:

-«Καλύτερα μιας ώρας ελεύτερη ζωή –παρά σαράντα χρόνια σκλαβιά και φυλακή!»  
πέταξε το λόγο του κι ο καπετάν Τριαλώνης από τη Γεράπετρα.

Ήταν ένα αγριομούστακο χαμαντράκι που 'χε ξεσκολίσει και καλούτσικα γράμματα, είχε φτάσει ως το Οχτώχι και κάτεχε ξεστήθου το Ρήγα Φεραίο και τη φυλλάδα του Αγαθάγγελου· και στην αντριγιά δεν είχε το ταίρι του. Άλλοι έλεγαν πως χιμούσε με τόσην αποκοτιά και στ' ασκέρια της Τουρκιάς, γιατί 'ταν γιος καλικάντζαρου και δεν τον έπιανε η μπάλα· δε φοβόταν θάνατο, γιατί κρατούσε τίμιο ξύλο· μα μερικοί ψυχανεμίζονταν πως το τίμιο ξύλο ήταν η καρδιά του.

Ο γερο-Καμπανάρος κούνησε τη γεμάτη γνώση κεφαλά του:

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<sup>451</sup> A literary account of performances of fragments from *Ερωτόκριτος* at the end of the 19th century in Crete and its presence as a reading interest of people is found in Kondylakis' *Η πρώτη αγάπη* where the narrator refers especially to the part of Rotokritos' farewell to Aretousa: "Τον «Ερωτόκριτο» γνώριζα έως τότε από τις χειμωνιάτικες αποσπερίδες, όπου τον διάβαζαν με μια τραγουδιστή απαγγελία. Τον γνώριζα κι από τα μέρη που τραγουδούσαν στο χορό. Αλλά μόνον τότε μούτυχε το βιβλίο και το διάβασα ολόκληρο. Και τόσο βρήκα τον πόνο μου στους στίχους του αποχαιρετισμού, ώστε έκλαιγα ενώ τους διάβαζα. Μούρθε μάλιστα και ιδέα να κάμω κι εγώ ένα παρόμοιο ποίημα και να περιγράψω τα ερωτικά μου βάσανα. Αλλ' η στιχουργική μου επιχείρηση δεν πήγε πολύ μακριά. Την αφήκα γρήγορα". Kondylakis 1993: 301.

<sup>452</sup> The presentation of the sacred wood as a source of power for a warrior is also found in *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* in a story that Zorbas recounts to the narrator (Kazantzakis 2010a: 254-255). Philippides argues that Zorbas' story is connected with Karkavitsas' short story "Ο Καπετάν Βέργας" where kapetan Vergas is killed after he offers the sacred wood to his beloved. See Philippides 1997: 217-218.

-Το μπουζούκι του Ρήγα Φεραίου, μουρμούρισε, θα μας φάει!<sup>453</sup>

Kabanaros, who believes that the Cretans should not yet conduct a battle against the Turks, opposes to the effect of Rigas' words on people through a comment on their musicality (*το μπουζούκι του Ρήγα Φεραίου*).

Another category of folk cultural material that is contained in quotations in the novel is *μαντινάδες*. They are also being sung by the characters and their singing is accompanied by the melody of *λύρα*. For instance, at the night following Manousakas' death his friends are singing a *μαντινάδα* for the widow while they later convert their songs to Christian hymns:

Κι άρχισε, κάνοντας πως παίζει το δοξάρι στον αέρα, να σιγοτραγουδάει:

-Ολα τα ξαλησμόνησες, μα μιας αυγής θυμήσου...

Κι οι άλλοι δυο πήραν το τσάκισμα -άιντες, άιντες, μα μιας αυγής θυμήσου!

-...όντας σε φίλουν κι έλεγες, νύχτα 'ναι και κοιμήσου!<sup>454</sup>

During the final moments of Siphakas the teacher also plays *λύρα* and sings a *μαντινάδα* speculating on the passage of time:

[...] έπαιζε τη λύρα κι όλο και τραγουδούσε την ίδια πάντα μαντινάδα κι είχαν βουρκώσει τα μάτια του:

-Στους κορδαλλούς τα σκόρπισα τα μπαρουτόσκαγά μου,

τώρα θωρώ σε, πέρδικα, και καίγεται η καρδιά μου!<sup>455</sup>

Siphakas, who is searching for the meaning of life in his discussion with the four captains before passing away, will die with the melody of *λύρα*. Afterwards, Kosmas prepares to leave in order to join the battle of the Cretans against the Turks

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<sup>453</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 343-344.

<sup>454</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 236. Sanoudakis examined the Cretan *μαντινάδες* and proverbs in the novel in Sanoudakis 2010: 56-63.

<sup>455</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 488.

on mount Selena and Stavroulios sings a well-known Cretan folk song which expresses the longing of the warrior to fight:

-Θα τραγουδήσω ένα κλέφτικο, με την άδειά σου, γέροντα! Και πριν πάρει απηλογιά, σήκωσε ο Σταυρουλιός το λαιμό, σείστηκε το σπίτι:

-Πότε θα κάμει ξαστεριά, πότε θα φλεβαρίσει,

ωχού! πότε θα φλεβαρίσει,

να πάρω το τουφέκι μου...<sup>456</sup>

The theme of the folk song that Stavroulios sings fits the occasion as Kosmas gets prepared to ascend to the mountain and fight against the Turks. What is more, the continuation of the folk song which is not included in the novel also appears to be relevant to the development of Kosmas' story. The next lines of the folk song, which are not quoted in the novel, contain the following lines:

Και ν' ανεβώ 'ς τον Ομαλό, 'ς τη στράτα τω Μουσούρω,

Να κάμω μάναις δίχως γιους, γυναίκες δίχως άντρες. (3-4)<sup>457</sup>

Kosmas ascends the mountain and participates in the battle against the Turks where he dies while his wife, Noemi, delivered a still-born baby boy. From this perspective, the folk song seems to encapsulate and foretell the progress of the events that concern Kosmas. Poetry in terms of songs and music are presented to be an integral part of people's life and death. Oral folk poetry emerges as an active constituent of the social and cultural life. Through the quotations from the folk tradition the characters express themselves while being in connection with the community.

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<sup>456</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 506.

<sup>457</sup> Jeannarakis 1876: 162, nr 191.



It should also be noted that the characters' words and actions correspond to notions and customs that permeate the cultural tradition, even when they do not make explicit quotations from earlier literary works or folk songs. For instance, Ventouzos who has decided to participate in the Cretan revolt spends a night at the house of Giorgaros.<sup>458</sup> Giorgaros does not reveal to Ventouzos that his son was killed on that day and he offers him philoxenia. It is only on the next day after he leaves Giorgaros' house that Ventouzos learns from an old man about the death of his best man's son. This stance is expressed in folk songs:

Μάνα, κι' αν έρθουν φίλοι μας κι' αν έρθουν οι γι εδικοί μας  
 μην τώνε 'πης πως 'πόθανα, να τσοι βαροκαρδίσης  
 στρώσε των τάβλα να γευτούν και κλίνη να πλαγιάσου  
 στρώσε τους παραπέζουλα να θέσουν τ' άρματάν τω  
 και το πρωί σα σηκωθούν και σ' αποχαιρετούνε  
 'πέτονε πως απόθανα.<sup>459</sup>

The concealing of death and the offering of philoxenia that are expressed in the Cretan folk song correspond to the conditions under which Ventouzos is offered philoxenia in Kazantzakis' novel.<sup>460</sup>

The suicide of Nouri Bey was succeeded by a massacre of the Christians by the Turks in revenge of his death. During the attack, the daughter of kapetan Michalis, Rinio, is warned that in order to prevent her torture by the Turks in case that they invade their house, kapetan Michalis will kill them. She answers that a person dies

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<sup>458</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 363-365.

<sup>459</sup> Kriaris 1920: 327.

<sup>460</sup> Mikromatis 1997: 152. This notion goes back to the ancient Greek tradition and its myth is developed in Euripides' *Alcestis*. For a comparative reading of Ventouzos' philoxenia by Giorgaros in *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* and Euripides' *Alcestis* see Paidas 2000: 157-168.

once and that she wants to die without shame: “Μια φορά θα πεθάνουμε, μάνα· ας πεθάνουμε αντρόπιαστες”.<sup>461</sup> Her words convey an attitude that has been expressed in Cretan heroic folk poetry. In the folk song that celebrates the life and death of Chatzi Michalis Giannaris he is warned by Cretans that they will also lose their life if the Turks capture him. Chatzi Michalis, however, says that a person dies once and he does not want to live in shame:

-Μια βολά εγεννήθηκα, μια βολά θ’ αποθάνω,

Και μια θα τον απαρνηθώ τον κόσμο τον απάνω.

Καλλιιά να με σκοτώσουνε, καλλιιά ’χω ν’ αποθάνω,

Παρά να πάρω τη ντροπή ’ς τον κόσμο τον απάνω.

Κι ας με σκοτώση ο πασάς κόβγει την κεφαλή μου. (57-61)<sup>462</sup>

Rinio’s mother, Katerina, has fought in her youth during the Cretan revolution of 1866.<sup>463</sup> The theme of the contribution of a girl to the 1866 revolt in Arkadi is recounted in Galateia Kazantzaki’s novella *Μια μικρή ηρωίδα* where Lenio was among the dead at the monastery. In *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* Katerina is not killed but her heroic activity becomes an element of the past after she marries kapetan Michalis

#### 4.2. NARRATIVE ALLUSIONS

*Kosmas Politis’ Eroica meets “Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης”*

The young generation of the Cretan hero is exemplified in the character of Thrasaki. The narration presents Thrasaki resembling kapetan Michalis in his

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<sup>461</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 324.

<sup>462</sup> Jeannarakis 1876: 63, nr 47.

<sup>463</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 44.

appearance and also in his attitude and actions. He is described as a young Cretan hero who is the descendant of great warriors and the hopes are bestowed on him for the liberation of Crete. The development of his story constitutes an embedded *Bildungsroman* in the novel on the grounds that it depicts his gradual passage from childhood towards adulthood as he comes in contact with Cretan history and his role in it, as he meets Pervola, and as he witnesses the death of Siphakas.

The impact of history from the viewpoint of the young generation was explored in the *Bildungsroman* by Giorgos Theotokas entitled *Λεωνής* (1940) where the writer draws upon his experiences when he was growing up in Constantinople. In the novel Leonis and his friends play games of war until they actually experience the effects of the real war that was raging, the First World War. The *Bildungsroman* by Prevelakis *Το Δέντρο* (1948), the first volume of the trilogy *Ο Κρητικός*, which was dedicated to Kazantzakis, presents the story of the young hero, Kostandis, who is growing up during the Cretan rebellions. The second volume of Prevelakis' trilogy, *Η Πρώτη Λευτεριά*, depicts the struggles of the Cretans in the period of 1895 to 1899 which led to Cretan autonomy. *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* includes both the depiction of the young Cretans who grow up amid the uprisings through the character of Thrasaki and also the involvement of the mature Cretans in the struggles towards liberty through the character of kapetan Michalis. In this way Kazantzakis' novel seems to combine the themes developed in the first two volumes of Prevelakis' *Ο Κρητικός*.

The narration revolving around the games of Thrasaki and his gradual development alludes to another *Bildungsroman*, Kosmas Politis' *Eroica* (1937). Kosmas Politis' novel seems to draw from the author's memories as he was growing up in Smyrna although the place that is constructed in the novel is fictional and cannot be identified with a specific city. *Eroica* covers a period of few weeks narrating the

story about teenagers who play heroic games. During these games one of the teenagers, Andreas, is injured and afterwards dies. At the same time when Andreas is wounded, Loizos, who plays the leader in the group of boys, and Alekos meet Monica. The boys experience love and death during the heroic games that they play. At the end of the novel, Alekos who has been in love with Monica, finds her in the garden and has an erotic encounter with her before being killed by her brother, Gaetano, who shoots him accidentally mistaking him for a cat.

In *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* the episode of the meeting of Thrasaki and his friends in the garden with Pervola alludes to the scene depicting Alekos and Monica in the garden at the end of *Eroica*. Pervola is the daughter of Signior Paraskevas who comes from Syros. He is presented as a foreigner being unable to fit into the Cretan society. In *Eroica*, Monica is the daughter of the Italian consul and she is also unable to be incorporated into the Greek community. In *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* Pervola is thrown down on the grass by Thrasaki and his friends (“ξαπλωμένη στα χόρτα, με μεσόκλειστα παιχνιδιστά μάτια, τους κοίταζε και περίμενε”)<sup>464</sup> just like the end of *Eroica* where Alekos sees Monica in the garden and says to her “Τι να σου κάνω τώρα... τι να σου κάνω τώρα...” as they lie down on the grass “κυλιστήκανε πάνω στους μενεξέδες”.<sup>465</sup> Moreover, Nikolas is asking a direct question that repeats words from Alekos’ questions to Monica in *Eroica*. Nikolas namely asks: “–Τι να την κάνουμε τώρα; ρώτησε ο Νικόλας, που περιεργάζονταν από πάνω ως κάτω την ξαπλωμένη Περβόλα και δεν ήξερε τι απόφαση να πάρει”.<sup>466</sup> In *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* Pervola sees a cat on the wall: “είχε γυρίσει από την άλλη μεριά το πρόσωπο και

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<sup>464</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 126.

<sup>465</sup> K. Politis 1983: 193.

<sup>466</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 126.

κοίταζε δυο γάτους στον αντικρινό τοίχο που ερωτοπάλευαν κι ούρλιαζαν”,<sup>467</sup> just as in the garden in *Eroica* a cat appears. Alekos is killed when Gaetano tries to shoot the cat that he sees on the wall: “ο γάτος χαρχαλεύει στο μαντρότοιχο”.<sup>468</sup>

In Kazantzakis’ novel the attack of Thrasaki and his friends against Pervola stops due to the intervention of Paraskevas. The name of this character links Kazantzakis’ novel with that of Politis even more on the grounds that Paraskevas is the name of the narrator in *Eroica* who also participates as a character in the story. In *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* Paraskevas is woken up by the voices and appears at the door of the house shouting: “-Παλιόπαιδα! [...] Κοιμόταν λοιπόν σήμερα βαθιά ο Συριανός, να δυναμώσει. Κι άξαφνα μέσα στον ύπνο του άκουσε τις φωνές της θυγατέρας του” and shouts again “Παλιόπαιδα! φώναξε χοντραίνοντας όσο μπορούσε τη φωνή του”.<sup>469</sup> Paraskevas’ waking up, the reference to his voice and the word *παλιόπαιδα* that he utters allude to the opening of *Eroica*. In the first scene of *Eroica* a woman is woken up by the boys and calls them with the word *παληόπαιδα*, the same word that Paraskevas uses in *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης*. The opening scene of *Eroica* is namely the following: “Το ποδοβολητό κι οι σκληριές φτάσαν στο κατακόρυφο –μεσημεριάτικο, την ώρα που ο κόσμος θέλει να ησυχάσει μετά το φαγητό. Μια γυναίκα έβαλε τη φωνή απ’ το κατώφλι της καγκελόπορτας: -Ε! δεν πάτε να παίξετε και παρακάτω! Παληόπαιδα!”.<sup>470</sup> Then, one of the boys realises that the woman knows his father and they decide to leave. In *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* Paraskevas realises that he knows Thrasaki’s father, kapetan Michalis, and starts panicking as Paraskevas is afraid of him. Thrasaki who appears to be the leader of the boys gives the signal for their

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<sup>467</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 125.

<sup>468</sup> K. Politis 1982: 195.

<sup>469</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 127.

<sup>470</sup> K. Politis 1982: 1.

departure as he says “Ομπρός, παιδιά! είπε το Θρασάκι και σφύριξε”<sup>471</sup> in the same manner that Loizos, the leader of the boys in *Eroica*, asks them to leave: “Εμπρός, μαρς! διάταξε ο αρχηγός”.<sup>472</sup>

The episode involving Thrasaki, Pervola and Paraskevas in the garden in *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* contains allusions to *Eroica* combining its ending and its beginning. Repetition of phrases (τι να την κάνουμε τώρα;), key words (παληόπαιδα), the scenery of the garden, the appearance of the cat, and also the name of Paraskevas allude to *Eroica*. In *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* the name of the place in which the boys see the girl is called Pervola and they also call her Pervola although that is not her real name (“η Περβόλα ήταν ένας απέραντος ρημαγμένος κήπος στην άκρα του Μεγάλου Κάστρου, γεμάτος φραγκοσυκιές και τσουκνίδες”).<sup>473</sup> Pano Perivolia is the name of the deserted district in the first scene of *Eroica* where Pakakokaki’s house is found (“Το ψηλό εκείνο σπίτι με τα ευρωπαϊκά κεραμίδια ήταν το τελευταίο μετά το σπίτι του γιατρού στο ερημικό ετούτο μέρος, τα Πάνω Περιβόλια”).<sup>474</sup> In Kazantzakis’ novel the name Pervola and the presence of the girl in the meadow evoke the name of the district Pano Perivolia in *Eroica*. Whereas Thrasaki mistreated the daughter of Paraskevas in the meadow he will later try to save Paraskevas who is being attacked by the Turks by calling his father, kapetan Michalis, to help him. Kapetan Michalis hesitates to rescue Paraskevas from the Turks but does so because he did not want to show cowardice in front of Thrasaki.

Another episode that includes the games of Thrasaki and his friends is the burning of the Jews’ houses. This scene alludes to the burning of Papakokaki’s house

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<sup>471</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 127.

<sup>472</sup> K. Politis 1982: 1.

<sup>473</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 124.

<sup>474</sup> K. Politis 1982: 2.

by Alekos in *Eroica* (pages 187-190). The boys have an enduring feud with the students of the Catholic school and especially with Papakokaki who attends this school although he is a Greek. The two novels share common imagery in the depiction of the fire scene and also verbal parallels. In Kazantzakis' novel Thrasaki is heading to the Jewish quarter while the streets are deserted since people are either asleep or away to the church (“Τα σπίτια ήταν κατασκότεινα, έρημοι οι δρόμοι”),<sup>475</sup> just as in *Eroica* everything seems to be deserted before the burning of the house (“Έμοιαζε με πολιτεία έρημη”).<sup>476</sup> When the fire breaks out, Thrasaki can see the variety of colours that the smoke is acquiring (“Ολομεμιάς οι φλόγες, κόκκινες, γαλαζωπές, ανέβηκαν κι έγλειψαν απαλά τα δυο σαρακοφαγωμένα θυρόφυλλα”)<sup>477</sup> like the colours that the wall takes when it is set on fire in *Eroica* (“Μπροστά του ο μαντρότοιχος γινόταν τώρα φεγγερός, σαν κίτρινος, σαν κόκκινος, πότε γαλάζιος και πορτοκαλής”).<sup>478</sup>

Thrasaki observes his friends' inability to light the fire and he expresses his indignation by calling them *κουτεντέδες* (“-Τον κακό σας τον καιρό, κουτεντέδες! Μήτε φωτιά, μωρέ, δεν είστε άξιοι να βάλετε”).<sup>479</sup> Similarly, in *Eroica* Alekos after realising his friends' mistakes during the burning of the house, calls them twice *κουτοί*: “η αντλία (τι κουτοί να την αφήσουν, τι κουτοί!)”.<sup>480</sup> The word *κουτοί* is echoed in the word that Thrasaki says (*κουτεντέδες*). Finally, Thrasaki's friends run away when the fire breaks out leaving him alone (“Έβαλαν τα πόδια τους στον ώμο οι πιτσιρίκοι, χάθηκαν μέσα στα νυχτοσόκακα σκώντας στα γέλια”),<sup>481</sup> just like Alekos'

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<sup>475</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 187.

<sup>476</sup> K. Politis 1982: 188.

<sup>477</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 189.

<sup>478</sup> K. Politis 1982: 190.

<sup>479</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 189.

<sup>480</sup> K. Politis 1982: 191.

<sup>481</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 189.

friends hurry off when the fire starts (“όπου φύγει-φύγει τα παιδιά -εγκαταλείψανε και την αντλία!”).<sup>482</sup>

Unlike Papakokaki’s house in *Eroica*, the houses of the Jews that are burnt by Thrasaki and his friends present a poor image and have been built by humble materials: “Χαμόσπιτα, φτωχόσπιτα, άλλα από χώμα και ξερολίθι, άλλα από γκαζοτενεκέδες. Μονάχα του χαχάμη το σπίτι ήταν λίγο πιο μεγάλο, με παράθυρο στο δρόμο κι ένα μικρό ξύλινο μπαλκονάκι”.<sup>483</sup> The material of *γκαζοτενεκές* from which the houses are made is a characteristic one in *Eroica*. This is the material from which the boys’ helmets are made. Their helmets, like the Jews’ houses, are all the same apart from that of the leader: “Μερικοί βγάλανε τις περικεφαλαίες ν’ ανασάνουν. Εκτός από του αρχηγού, των αλλωνών είναι από κοινό γκαζοτενεκέ, φτιαγμένες όμως τεχνικά, έτσι που νάρχεται στη μέση, κατακούτελα, το άστρο της μάρκας του πετρόλαδου”.<sup>484</sup> The helmets that the boys wear in *Eroica* are for them a symbol of heroism.<sup>485</sup> It is an important constituent of their heroic games. At the same time, the helmet is a part of the boys’ disguise. When Alekos goes to the masked ball of Montecuculi he wears a helmet and a costume.<sup>486</sup> He will wear this costume again long after the carnival: “ο Αλέκος έφτασε πρώτος-πρώτος στο μαγαζί του μπάρμπα Λούκη. Φορούσε τη στολή με τα γαλόνια, όπως είχε μείνει από τις απόκριες”.<sup>487</sup>

In *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* the helmet and the disguise are present during the boys’ games as they put on various costumes. Nikolas, like Alekos in *Eroica*, wears a helmet and has a costume which he had kept since the carnival: “ο Νικόλας, που ήταν

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<sup>482</sup> K. Politis 1982: 190.

<sup>483</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 188.

<sup>484</sup> K. Politis 1982: 3.

<sup>485</sup> See Mackridge 1982: μ’-μβ’.

<sup>486</sup> K. Politis 1982: 41.

<sup>487</sup> K. Politis 1982: 187.



ο πιο θεωρατικός, έβαζε μian περικεφαλαία χάρτινη και μια μουντσούνα που 'χαν φυλάξει από τις Αποκριές, ανέβαινε και κορδώνουνταν στο σαμάρι του γαιδάρου, ακίνητος”.<sup>488</sup> This scene takes place in a stable that the children had converted into a church. The stable in which the boys are wearing masks is next to the official church of the town. The “carnavalesque” element has been connected with “dialogism” by Bakhtin on the grounds that it questions the monologic ideology promoted by official institutions such as religion.<sup>489</sup> This is emphasised in *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* as the boys engage in “carnavalesque” actions and disguise when they are in their improvised “church”. In there Thrasaki pretends to be a priest, quotes poems that he can remember and instead of the Bible he reads *Robinson Crusoe*: “και το Θρασάκι, όρθιο στη μέση του στάβλου, διάβαζε το Ροβινσώνα αντί για το Βαγγέλιο”.<sup>490</sup> In *Eroica* Paraskevas is explicitly linked with Defoe’s novel in a wordplay between his name and Friday: “-Τι να ξανάρθω την Παρασκευή;... -Χα-χα-χα! Μα είναι τ’ όνομά σου! Μήπως δε διάβασες και γαλλικά το Robinson;”.<sup>491</sup> In the nineteenth century Defoe’s novel was a popular book not only for adults but also for children. It saw numerous translations in Greek and adaptations and it was introduced as an instructive book at schools.<sup>492</sup>

Both *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* and *Eroica* present affinities with Homer’s *Iliad*. In *Eroica* Loizos is, like Achilles, the leader whose comrade Andreas dies, like Patroclus. Monica evokes Helen while Pierre is a rival to the boys like Paris.<sup>493</sup> *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* is linked with Homer’s *Iliad* through parallels of the Cretan and

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<sup>488</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 296.

<sup>489</sup> Bakhtin 1984b.

<sup>490</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 296.

<sup>491</sup> K. Politis 1982: 109. For the quotations and allusions in *Eroica* see Mackridge 1999: 66-78.

<sup>492</sup> See Denisi 1997: 67-83.

<sup>493</sup> For the connections between Kosmas Politis’ *Eroica* and Homer’s *Iliad* see Mackridge 1982: μ’-μβ’. Also see Beaton 1985: 43-45.

Turkish camp and that of the Achaeans and Trojans in Homer.<sup>494</sup> The adult heroes in *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* present correspondences with the *Iliad*. Kapetan Michalis, Emine, and Nouri Bay present connections with the Homeric Achilles, Briseis, Helen and Hector.<sup>495</sup> Moreover, it should be added that there is interconnection of Thrasaki and his friends with the characters in Politis' novel (Loizos, Alekos and Monica) who in their turn reflect the Iliadic heroes and through the connections with *Eroica* the children in Kazantzakis' novel echo heroic values and motifs that are present in the *Iliad*. For instance, the boys' quarrel about leadership in Kazantzakis' novel reflects the clash of the boys in *Eroica* about the selection of the leader going back to the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon in the *Iliad* which does not only concern the possession of two female prisoners but also the issue of leadership in the Achaean camp. In *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* the children wear helmets during their games evoking the helmet that the children wear in *Eroica*. The connection of the characters with the helmet recalls the association of Achilles with his armor in the *Iliad* and especially with his helmet.

In this way, a dense intertextual nexus is woven between *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης*, *Eroica* and the *Iliad*. Kosmas Politis in 1937 publishes a modernist novel about a grown man who recounts his childhood and the children of his story evoke heroes and episodes of the *Iliad* while the adults of the story in *Eroica* do not present a heroic attitude. In 1949-1950 Kazantzakis recounting his childhood memories as he notes in the prologue produces a novel where the adult characters bear affinities with the Homeric heroes and at the same time the under-age characters echo *Eroica's* children who reflect indirectly the Iliadic heroes.

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<sup>494</sup> Bien argues that there is a generic confusion which stems from the permutation of features from the epic and modes of disparate genres. See Bien 2007: 372-393.

<sup>495</sup> On the relation of Kazantzakis' novel to Homer's *Iliad* see Meraklis 1977b: 84-88, Constantinides 1984: 31-41 and Paschalis 2010: 143-151.

## *The combat of Digenis and Charos*

Siphakas in his final moments before his death refers to the figure of Charos. Earlier looking back to Siphakas' life the narrator comments that he had fought with Charos and that he has won:

-Όταν τρώνε οι γιοί μου, έλεγε, κουνιέται το σπίτι· «μωρέ, σεισμό κάνει; ρωτούν οι ξενοπάτες· όχι, οι γιοι του Σήφακα τρώνε». Μα ήρθε ο Χάρος, στάθηκε στο κατώφλι, είδε μέσα στη μεγάλη αυλή· περίσσια πολλοί του φάνηκαν, περίσσια παλικαράδες· ζήτησε το μερτικό του· άλλους τους πήρε αντρίστικα στον πόλεμο, χαλάλι του! άλλους μπαμπέσικα στο στρώμα, χαράμι του! Όμως απόμειναν κάμποσοι και του 'καμαν αγγόνια και δισέγγονα, ας είναι καλά· ένας ήταν, εκατό αφήνει πίσω του· κι αυτοί πάλι θ' αφήσουν χίλιους, και θα γεμίσει η Κρήτη. Πόσους θα φάει ο Χάρος; πόσους ο Τούρκος; πάλι θ' απομείνει μαγιά· μπορεί το λοιπόν να πεθάνει ήσυχος· πάλεψε κι έβαλε κάτω το Χάρο.<sup>496</sup>

The combat of Digenis with Charos is depicted in the folk poetry of the Akritic cycle. In chapter 1 we examined Kazantzakis' exploration of the figure of Digenis Akritis. Moreover, in Kazantzakis' *Ασκητική* the final credo refers to Akritas as a God and includes a specific reference to the combat of Akritas with death which is located into the human heart: "ΠΙΣΤΕΥΩ ΣΤΗΝ ΚΑΡΔΙΑ ΤΟΥ ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΥ, ΤΟ ΧΩΜΑΤΕΝΙΟ ΑΛΩΝΙ, ΟΠΟΥ ΜΕΡΑ ΚΑΙ ΝΥΧΤΑ ΠΑΛΕΥΕΙ Ο ΑΚΡΙΤΑΣ ΜΕ ΤΟ ΘΑΝΑΤΟ".<sup>497</sup> In *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* the reference to Siphakas' fight with Charos is linked with the scenery, the vocabulary, and motifs that are found in folk songs of the Akritic cycle. More specifically it is associated with the Cretan version entitled "Ο Διγενής και η μάνναν του".<sup>498</sup> Here the outcome of the symbolic fight with Charos changes in the sense that Siphakas is depicted as metaphorically defeating Charos through the production of children.

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<sup>496</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 208-209.

<sup>497</sup> Kazantzakis 1971: 95.

<sup>498</sup> This version of the folk song is included in Jeannarakis 1876: 214, nr 276.

Siphakas' grandson, Thrasaki, is also involved in a combat, namely against Charalabis, whose description alludes to the combat of Digenis and Charos and more specifically to the same Cretan version of the folk song. The episode is set at the mountain's foot: "Στη ρίζα του βουνού το Θρασάκι έβαλε τα δυο του δάχτυλα στο στόμα, σφύριξε".<sup>499</sup> The scenery recalls the Cretan *ριζίτικα*. In the introduction of the collection of *Ριζίτικα* Stamatis Apostolakis notes: "*Ριζίτικα* λέγονται τα δημοτικά τραγούδια που ζουν από αιώνες και τραγουδιούνται μέχρι σήμερα από το λαό που ζει στις Ρίζες. Ρίζες και χωριά της ρίζας λέμε τα χωριά των επαρχιών του νομού Χανίων που βρίσκονται στη ρίζα των Λευκών Ορέων, και βέβαια τα «ψηλά χωριά» των επαρχιών των Χανίων".<sup>500</sup> As Thrasaki whistles at the foot of the mountain (*ρίζα*) the connection with the tradition of *ριζίτικα τραγούδια* is first implied.

Upon learning the news that the revolt of the adult Cretans against the Turks has started, Thrasaki and his friends decide to go to a village occupied by Turks and to attack the young Turks. The narration focuses on the setting of the time (*είχε πια χειμωνιάσει*) and then to the children's lack of supplies to eat and drink:

-Πεινώ! έκαμε το Μανολιό του Μαστραπά κι έπιασε την κοιλιά του.

-Ωχού! ξεχάσαμε να πάρουμε μαζί μας ζωθοφές!

Στάθηκαν ξεχάσκωτοι, ξαφνικά όλους τους θέρισε η πείνα.

-Και νερό! φώναξε ένας άλλος· διψώ! Ξεχάσαμε να πάρουμε και νερό.

-Να γυρίσουμε πίσω να πάρουμε! πρότειναν μερικοί κι έγειραν τα μούτρα κατά το χωριό.

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<sup>499</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 418.

<sup>500</sup> Apostolakis 1993: 16.

-Κανένας δε θα γυρίσει! φώναξε το Θρασάκι. Πόλεμος είναι· θα πεινάσουμε και θα διψάσουμε, μα θα κάνουμε πως φάγαμε κι ήπιαμε και δεν έχουμε ανάγκη. Έτσι κάνουν τα παλικάρια.<sup>501</sup>

The folk song “Ο Διγενής και η μάνναν του” begins with a reference to the time:

Πάντα’ς τση τρεις του Νεομπριού κ’ εις τσ’ εικοστρείς τ’ Απρίλη (1).<sup>502</sup>

Then, the description of the festivity where people are urged to proceed to the consumption of food and drinking follows:

Μηδ’ έτρωγε, μηδ’ έπινε, μηδέ κ’ εχαροκόπα.

Σφάζει τρακόσια πρόβατα και πεντακόσια γίδια,

Εννιά χωριά εκάλεσε, χιλιάδες παλληκάρια·

“Τρώτε και πίνετε παιδιά κ’ έχετε και την έγνοια,

Μην ερθ’ ο Χάρος να μας βρη να μαζε διαγουμίση,

Να πάρη άντρες για σπαθί και νιούς για το μαχαίρι”. (4-9)<sup>503</sup>

At this point Charos appears and challenges men to fight. Digenis comes forward and announces that he accepts the challenge. Then the combat of Digenis against Charos begins:

Κι’ όντεν το λόγο κ’ ήλεγε ο Χάροντας προβαίνει·

“Ποιος έχει μπράτσα σίδερα και πόδια ατσαλένια,

Να πάμε ν’ απαλέψωμε ’ς το σιδερόν αλώνι;”

Κι’ άλλος και δεν του μίλησε, δεν του ’πε πως θα πάη,

Μ’ ο Διγενής, τση χήρας γιος, εβγήκε ς τ’ αντροκάλιο·

“Εγώ ’χω μπράτσα σίδερα και πόδια ατσαλένια,

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<sup>501</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 419-420.

<sup>502</sup> Jeannarakis 1876: 214, nr 276.

<sup>503</sup> Jeannarakis 1876: 214, nr 276.

Να πάμε ν' απαλέψουμε 'ς το σιδερόν αλώνι.”

Και πάνε κι' απαλεύγανε απ' το ταχύ ως το βράδυ. (10-17)<sup>504</sup>

In Kazantzakis' novel while the boys are planning their attack against the Turks, Andrikos suggests the following: “θ' αντροκαλέσουμε τα Τουρκάκια, να βγουν όξω, στ' αλώνια, να παλέψουμε”.<sup>505</sup> Andrikos' phrase includes key words that repeat words included in the folk song. The word *αντροκαλέσουμε* that he uses echoes the word *αντροκάλιο* of the song. The word *αλώνια* evokes the word *αλώνι* in the folk song and the word *παλέψουμε* corresponds to the song's *απαλέψουμε*. Then Charalabis invites Thrasaki to wrestle with him: “-Εσύ, εσύ; άφρισε ο Χαραλάμπης· έλα να παλέψουμε!”.<sup>506</sup> The connection with the folk song is emphasised by the names of the characters that are present in this scene. The word *Χάρος* is echoed in the first component of the name *Χαραλάμπης*, the character against whom Thrasaki fights, and also in the names of two other characters that appear in this episode, namely *Χαρίτος* and *Χαρίδημος*. Moreover, *Αντρίκος* urges the boys to fight saying the word *αντροκαλέσουμε* which echoes his name and also the word *αντροκάλιο* that is contained in the folk song.

In the folk song after a long combat of Digenis against Charos, the latter defeats Digenis by trickery:

Κ' οι δυο σφιχταπαλεύγανε κ' οι δυο αγκομαχούσαν

Οι πάτοι και οι γύροι του του αλωνιού ετρίζαν.

Πολύν καιρό 'παλεύγανε κιανείς των δεν ενίκα,

Κι' ο Χάροντας με μπαμπεσιά βουλήθη να νικήση·

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<sup>504</sup> Jeannarakis 1876: 214, nr 276.

<sup>505</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 419.

<sup>506</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 421.

Βάνει πόδα του Διγενή και κάτω τονε βάνει. (22-26)<sup>507</sup>

In the novel Thrasaki accepts fighting with Charalabis but asks him to fight fairly and he specifically warns him not to employ *μπαμπεσιές*: “-Έρχουμαι! έκαμε το Θρασάκι και παράδωσε τη λαζαρίνα στον μπαϊραχτάρη· άσε κάτω και συ το δρεπάνι. Όχι μπαμπεσιές· ξαρμάτωτος εγώ, ξαρμάτωτος κι εσύ· τίμια πράματα!”.<sup>508</sup> In the folk song, the *μπαμπεσιά* that Charos does is to trip Digenis up: *Βάνει πόδα του Διγενή*. Charalabis in the novel just like Charos in the folk song trips Thrasaki up (*του 'βαλε τρικλοποδιά*) and the standard-bearer characterises Charalabis' act as *μπαμπεσιά*:

χύθηκε ο Χαραλάμης, του 'βαλε τρικλοποδιά, και το Θρασάκι προσμούρωσε και θα 'πεφτε αν δεν πρόφτανε να πιαστεί από ένα βράχο.

-Μπαμπεσιά! μπαμπεσιά! ούρλιασε ο μπαϊραχτάρης κουνώντας μανιασμένα τη φεσάρα του παππού.<sup>509</sup>

Digenis loses the battle after Charos' trickery in the folk song. In Kazantzakis' novel however there is a twist at this point. Thrasaki after Charalabis' trickery fights back by trickery himself: he grasps a sickle and turns it against Charalabis. It is now Thrasaki's move that is characterised as *μπαμπεσιά*:

Πέταξε το Θρασάκι τη Λαζαρίνα, στράφηκε κι είδε τον Αντρίκο που του άπλωνε το δρεπάνι του· το άρπαξε, τσούγκρισαν τα δυο δρεπάνια απάνω από τα κεφάλια τους.

-Μπαμπεσιά! μπαμπεσιά! φώναξαν τώρα κι οι φίλοι του Χαραλάμης και χύθηκαν απάνω στον μπαϊραχτάρη.<sup>510</sup>

The sickle is an object with which Charos is associated in the tradition. In Marinos Tzanes Bounialis' *Ο Κρητικός Πόλεμος*, which recounts the Cretan war of

<sup>507</sup> Jeannarakis 1876: 214, nr 276.

<sup>508</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 421.

<sup>509</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 422.

<sup>510</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 423.

1645-1669 and was written shortly after the fall of Crete in 1669, there is an image of Charos with the sickle depicting the large number of deaths during the Cretan war:

Απάνω κάτω έβλεπες άντρες αποθαμένους  
κ' εκείτουνταν εδώ κ' εκεί, στον κάμπο ξαπλωμένους.  
Τον Χάρον εκοιτάζανε στη μέση να πετάται,  
να κόφτει Τούρκους και Ρωμιούς, Φράγκους να μη λυπάται·  
ψυχές να βγάνει από κορμιά, αίμα πολύ να χύνει,  
κ' η όργητά του η κακή ν' άφτει σαν το καμίνι.  
Επέτα με διχώς φτερά κ' εκράτειε το δρεπάνι,  
έξω και μέσα να κολά, κακό πολύ να κάνει·  
αστάχια εθέριζε ξερά κι άλλα ξεσταχιασμένα,  
κι άλλα 'κοφτε πλησότατα, μόνο ξεφυτρωμένα·  
τούτοι 'τον άντρες του σπαθιού και γέροντες ομάδι,  
νέοι, γυναίκες και παιδιά και τσ' έπαιρνε στον Άδη. (167.17-168.2)<sup>511</sup>

The connection of Thrasaki with the tradition and the heroes of the past seems to support his claim that he is a hundred or a thousand years old when Charidimos asks him his age:

Ο βοσκός τους κοίταζε, τους καμάρωνε και γελούσε:  
-Μωρέ, τ' αφιλότιμα, μурμουούριζε, έχουν το χάζι τους! Καλά το λένε πως ο Κρητικός γεννιέται με το τουφέκι· σ' ένα του χέρι κρατάει το τουφέκι, στο άλλο το βυζί της μάνας του και βυζαίνει· τώρα κάνουν σύναξη, να πάρουν απόφαση, σα να 'ναι γέροι πολεμάρχοι κι έχουν να δώσουν απόκριση στο Σουλτάνο.  
-Βρε Θρασάκι, φώναξε, πόσων χρονών είσαι –δε μου λες;

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<sup>511</sup> Bounialis 1995: 149-150.



-Εκατό χρονών, αποκρίθηκε αυτός αγριεμένος. Εκατό χρονών, χιλίων χρονών –τι σε νοιάζει;<sup>512</sup>

In the folk song the mother of Digenis is watching his combat against Charos. She intends to treat Digenis to wine in case he wins and she also has poison with her so as to drink it herself if Digenis loses:

Κ' η μάναν του του Διγενή στέκει 'ς τη μιν του μπάντα.

Τριώ λογιώ κρασί βαστά, τριώ λογιώ φαρμάκι,

Κι' άνε νικήσ' ο Διγενής κρασί να τον κεράση,

Πάλι και δε να πιή ευτή ντελόγκος το φαρμάκι. (18-21)<sup>513</sup>

However, she does not drink the wine as Digenis is defeated and she finally drinks the poison:

Κ' η δόλια η μανούλαν του ήπιεν το το φαρμάκι. (27)<sup>514</sup>

In the novel Charidimos watches the fight of Thrasaki with Charalabis and explains that he does not carry with him another drink but only wine and treats the boys to wine:

Κι ο βοσκός έβγαλε το φλασκι από τη βούρια.

-Δεν έχω νερό, βρε παιδιά, καλό 'ναι και το κρασί! Στην υγεία σας!

Ανάγειρε το λαιμό, ήπιε, πέρασε το φλασκι στο παιδομάνι' κακάρισε το κρασί, άδειασε η φλάσκα.<sup>515</sup>

In Cretan versions of the folk songs Charos traps Digenis being unable otherwise to defeat him. In this version it is characterised as *μπαμπεσιά* while in other

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<sup>512</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 425.

<sup>513</sup> Jeannarakis 1876: 214, nr 276.

<sup>514</sup> Jeannarakis 1876: 214, nr 276.

<sup>515</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 425.

Cretan versions it is characterised as *χωσιά*.<sup>516</sup> The connection with the folk song gives to Thrasaki heroic dimensions and through the twists that are made Thrasaki even seems to surpass Digenis. He has *θάρρος* (courage) but also *θράσος* (audacity) as his name suggests.

### *The earthquake of 1856 and Polyxingis' meeting with Emine*

A character who is presented as a brave warrior in the novel is Polyxingis. He is a different version of the Cretan hero in comparison to kapetan Michalis. Like kapetan Michalis he is brave and courageous during war. However, when the battles end he is a light-hearted and jovial man. The development of Polyxingis is related to the folk and literary tradition of Crete. Polyxingis was a historical person and according to the account of Phanourakis he had not been associated with a Muslim.<sup>517</sup> In 1889, which is the narrative time of the novel, no earthquake has been recorded historically affecting the city.<sup>518</sup> The earthquake is a device employed in the novel which results in the meeting of Polyxingis with Emine.

Shortly before the earthquake, old women observe signs that had happened before in a previous earthquake that they remember:

Μερικές γριές ψυχανεμίστηκαν το κακό, βγήκαν και κάθουνταν στα κατώφλια, μα δεν άνοιγαν το στόμα να ξεφανερώσουν το λογισμό τους· φοβούνταν μην τις ακούσει η Καστρινή Μοίρα [...]

-Θυμάσαι και την άλλη φορά, φύλλο δεν κουνιόταν...

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<sup>516</sup> Another Cretan version of the death of Digenis depicting Charos' *χωσιά* is included in N. G. Politis 1914: 104-105, nr 78. For the device of *χωσιά* see Romaios 1953: 394-408. For the versions of the battle against Charos in Greek folk poetry see Saunier 1972: 119-152.

<sup>517</sup> Phanourakis 1958: 193.

<sup>518</sup> For an account of the earthquakes in Heraklion, see Platakis 1950: 463-526.

-Σώπα!

-Και δε γρικάς μια βουή κάτω απ' τα πόδια σου;<sup>519</sup>

The old women refer to the earthquake of 29 September 1856. Its consequences in Megalo Kastro have been included in folk songs. The state of immobility and the deep sound from beneath the earth that they observe are present in versions of folk songs about the earthquake:

Κ' η θάλασσ' η ακίνητη και οι γι οχτώ ανέμοι,

Τρία λεφτά βοά η γης, καπνός 'ποκάτω βγαίνει.

Χάνονται χώραις και χωριά, σαν όντε χάνετ' άστρο,

Μα δεν υπόφερε κιαμιά σαν το Μεγάλο Κάστρο. (7-10)<sup>520</sup>

Then the earthquake occurs. In Kazantzakis' novel during the earthquake Roucheni shouts "Αμάν! Γιαραμπή!" and Emine comes out of the house having her face uncovered:

Κι η Ρουχένη, η θεόρατη Αραπίνα που ξεπρόβαινε τη στιγμή εκείνη από τη γωνιά, έσυρε φωνή: -Αμάν, γιαραμπή! [...] Άξαφνα η πράσινη δοξαρωτή πόρτα άνοιξε και πετάχτηκε στο δρόμο ξέσκεπη, ξεχτένιστη, ξυπόλυτη, σκληρίζοντας, η Εμινέ χανούμη, και σωριάστηκε καταμεσίς του δρόμου λιπόθυμη· πίσω της έτρεχε, κρατώντας τα κόκκινα πασουμάκια της κυράς της, η χριστιανή Αραπίνα.<sup>521</sup>

The words that Roucheni utters (*αμάν, γιαραμπή*) and the image of Muslim women rushing out of their houses with their faces unmasked are found in a version of the song that recounts the earthquake of 1856:

Κ' οι Τουρκοπούλες παραμπρός που κάνανε χαρέμι,

ετότες εβρεθήκανε γδυμνές εις το μπεντένι.

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<sup>519</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 97.

<sup>520</sup> Jeannarakis 1876: 83, nr 60. Also Kriaris 1920: 131.

<sup>521</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 116-117.

Φωνιάζου μπισιλιμαχί κι αμάν και γιαραμπί μου

και μια τσ' αλλής ελέγανε: «Μπαν είδες το παιδί μου;» (5-8)<sup>522</sup>

At this moment Emine and Polyxenis meet. The first words that Polyxenis exchanges with Emine include references to the Christian God. He also asks for a divine intervention: “-Αν υπάρχει Θεός, μια μέρα θα σε αγγίξω, Εμινέ χανούμη, είπε πεισματωμένος, μια μέρα θα σ’ αγγίξω, ο κόσμος να χαλάσει! [...] -Ο Θεός ο δικός μου, αποκρίθηκε ο άντρας, αγαπάει τις Κερκέζες, κι είναι παντοδύναμος”.<sup>523</sup> In the folk song the Christian women are advised to ask for divine help:

Κοκκώνες Ρωμιοπούλες μου, αφού ’στε στο καφέσι,

φωνιάξετε τση Παναγιάς κ’ έχει ο θεός να πέψη. (9-10)<sup>524</sup>

The folk song includes the image of a divine fire that is being thrown at the centre of the city:

Θεοτική φωτιά ’πεσε πάνω στο Μεϊντάνι,

Οι γεμιτζήδες το ’δανε ποκάτω στο λιμάνι. (13-14)<sup>525</sup>

In Kazantzakis’ novel Polyxenis is found in a state of turmoil after he meets Emine and he seeks a fire to throw himself in: “που ’ναι μια φωτιά, να πέσω μέσα να δροσερέψω;”.<sup>526</sup> In the folk song there is also a reference to a man named Zographakis who watches the oil flowing to the port:

Μα ο Ζωγραφάκης το ’χενε το λάδι στο πιθάρι

κ’ ετοτεσάς το ξάνοιγε κ’ ήφτανε στο λιμάνι.

Κ’ ήκλαιγε αυτός στη μια μερά κ’ οι δούλοι ντου στην άλλη,

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<sup>522</sup> Detorakis 1976: 64-65, nr 51.

<sup>523</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 118-119.

<sup>524</sup> Detorakis 1976: 65, nr 51.

<sup>525</sup> Detorakis 1976: 65, nr 51.

<sup>526</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 119.

το λάδι εξανοίγανε που 'φτανε στο λιμάνι.

Την ταχινή την Κυριακή εγίνηκεν ειρήνη

και τσι νεκρούς εβάνανε πέντ' εξ' οχτώ στην κλίνη. (15-20)<sup>527</sup>

In the novel, in a probable wordplay with the name *Ζωγραφάκης*, Polyxingis watches the places around him in Megalo Kastro up to the sea like being *ζωγραφισμένα*: “Κοίταξε γύρα του τα 'χε σαστίσει τα σοκάκια άλλαξαν, τα μούτρα των ανθρώπων άλλαξαν, το Μεγάλο Κάστρο κυμάτιζε κάτω από τα πόδια του, σαν πολύχρωμο περδικοπάνι που είχε ζωγραφισμένα απάνω του σπίτια και μιναρέδες και μπεντένια και θάλασσες”.<sup>528</sup> In *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* there are no deaths caused by the earthquake whereas in the folk song the dead men are being counted after the earthquake and they are eight. The earthquake however in the novel was the cause of Polyxingis' meeting with Emine whose consequences will eventually prove fatal. Their relationship will trigger the jealousy of kapetan Michalis and he will kill her before being killed himself along with six other warriors on mount Selena.

In *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* the priest attributes the cause of the earthquake to human blasphemy: “-Ημαρτον, Θε μου, μουρμούριζε ο Μητροπολίτης και τα μάτια του είχαν γεμίσει δάκρυα ήμαρτον! Εγώ φταίω αντί να μιλήσω για τα Πάθη σου, μίλησα για την Κρήτη”.<sup>529</sup> Also there is a description of Polyxingis comparing man with God shortly before the earthquake, something which may be perceived as blasphemy. Polyxingis was mumbling: “-Μωρέ δεν είναι κρίμα κι άδικο, μουρμούριζε, να μη βαστάει χίλια χρόνια η νιότη του ανθρώπου! Μπας και φοβήθηκε ο Θεός μην του πάρουμε το θρόνο, και σιγά σιγά, μπαμπέσικα, μας ξαρματώνει

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<sup>527</sup> Detorakis 1976: 65, nr 51.

<sup>528</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 119.

<sup>529</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 116.

[...].”<sup>530</sup> And the narrator adds: “Ακόμα ο λόγος κρέμουνταν στα χείλια του, κι αλάκερος ο τουρκομαχαλάς κουνήθηκε, πόρτες ξεχαρβαλώθηκαν [...]”.<sup>531</sup> In the Cretan folk songs about the earthquake of 1856 in Kastro people are in repentance to God and they also appear to see a *θεοτική φωτιά*. The natural disaster is more clearly attributed to human blasphemy in the poem by Manolis Sklavos *Η Συμφορά της Κρήτης* which recounted the earthquake of 29-30 May 1508 and its consequences in the same town, Kastro. The poem was probably written in that year.<sup>532</sup> Human sins are presented as the cause of the earthquake and the poet urges people to ask God for forgiveness. The personified Crete speaks observing that the cause of the earthquake was blasphemy:

Τα τέκνα μου μ’ εχάλασαν από την βλαστημιά τους

κ’ εχάλασαν τα σπίτια μου οπού ’σαν γονικά τους! (183-184)<sup>533</sup>

The poem refers to the disasters that the earthquake caused to the city and to the reactions of the people. In *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* the portrayal of the characters as they walk in the streets and quarters of Megalo Kastro is linked with a web of works whose subject matter is the same city.

*Marandis’ “Στο Κάστρο”*

As the plot unfolds Polyxenis will form a relationship with Emine. The story of the relationship of a Cretan Orthodox man from Heraklion with an Ottoman Muslim woman had been developed in Marandis’ novella *Στο Κάστρο. Ένας*

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<sup>530</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 116.

<sup>531</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 116.

<sup>532</sup> Van Gemert 1991: 70.

<sup>533</sup> Sklavos 1955.

*απαγορευμένος έρωτας* (1946). The novella recounts the story of Nikos and Gioulter and is set in Megalo Kastro at the beginning of the twentieth century. It presents elements of the topography of the city that will also be included in *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* such as Treis Kamares, Plateia Strata, Bedenaki and Meidani. In the narration of Marandis' *Στο Κάστρο* historical persons of Megalo Kastro appear that will also be included in Kazantzakis' novel such as Efendina:

Αυτό το πανδαιμόνιο παρουσίαζε τα πρωινά το μεϊντάνι του Κάστρου, την εποχή εκείνη, με τα ετερόκλητα εμπορεύματά του και την ανατολίτικη σιλουέττα του... Ένα πρωί ο Ρεμαντάν μπέης κατεβαίνοντας στο μεϊντάνι συνάντησε ένα συνηθισμένο θέαμα: την Εφεντίνα. Ήταν ένας μισότρελλος θρησκόληπτος τούρκος φορώντας τσελεμπίες που γυρνούσε όλη μέρα στα κέντρα και τον πείραζαν τα αλητόπαιδα.<sup>534</sup>

What is more, Marandis' novella refers to the activity of Kazantzakis as the founding member of the demoticist "Solomos" society of Heraklion. Moustafa, the brother of Gioulter, discusses with Nikos about the language question and mentions that he is a member of the "Solomos" society:

-Μωρέ θα επικρατήσουμε, ό,τι κι αν λένε! Μα χρειάζεται αγώνας. Και πρέπει όλοι να δουλέγουμε είτε κι ο Νίκος. -Είσαι γραμμένος στο Σύλλογο; Ρώτησε το Μουσταφά, ο Μίνωας. -Ακούς, λέει! Από τους πρώτους! Την εποχή αυτή με πρωτοβουλία του Καζαντζάκη, νέου τότε, ιδρύθηκε το πρώτο φιλολογικό σωματείο: «Σύλλογος ο Σολωμός» με κύριο σκοπό τη διάδοση της δημοτικής και έτρεξαν με ενθουσιασμό να γραφτούνε μέλη του, όλοι οι προοδευτικοί νέοι του Κάστρου.<sup>535</sup>

This information suggests that the narrative time of Marandis' novella is 1909 when the society was founded. In chapter 1 we noted that Kazantzakis knew Marandis and that in a letter that Kazantzakis had sent to him he referred to his work with favourable words. Marandis in 1946 includes a reference to Kazantzakis in his novella and then in 1949-1950 Kazantzakis writes the novel that is set in the same town and

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<sup>534</sup> Marandis 2012: 291.

<sup>535</sup> Marandis 2012: 281.

contains allusions to Marandis' text. There is thus a twofold interconnection between the works of the two authors.

A large part of the population of the city consists of Cretan Turks. The love of Nikos who is Christian and Gioulter who is Ottoman is presented as challenging the religious and social order of the city. Moreover, Nikos' friend, Moustafa, is the brother of Gioulter. Nikos is warned: "Δεν έχει μωρέ δικές μας κοπελλιές ν' αγαπήσεις μια, γη επαδά γη στην Αθήνα, μόνον έπιασες ναγαπήσεις την τουρκάλα; Κι' απόι δεν είναι μωρέ τίμιο πράμα, γιατί ο Μουσταφάς είναι φίλος σου και δεν είναι σωστό ν' αγαπάς την αδερφή του".<sup>536</sup> Nikos first flees to Phoinikia, a district outside Kastro, so as not to see Gioulter. His circle of friends advises him to stay away from her as there is danger of being killed ("Ωστε θε νάχουμε ελληνοτουρκικό επεισόδιο, είτε ο Ηρακλής γελώντας. –Α δεν έχομε και κανένα φονικό",<sup>537</sup> "Κι αυτή; Αυτή πρέπει να σφαγή... να σφαγούνε κι' οι δυο",<sup>538</sup> "Μόνο το μαχαίρι ξεκαθαρίζει τη δουλειά!... Μπορούμε να βάλωμε κι' ένα άλλο να τονε σκοτώση τον άτιμο!")<sup>539</sup>.

Nikos, however, finally yields to his feelings and forms a relationship with Gioulter. Polyxenis' relationship with Emine also involves religious and social predicaments. Polyxenis is a Cretan warrior fighting against the Ottomans for freedom and the expectations of Cretans from him are high. Kapetan Michalis who realises that Polyxenis has a relationship with Emine talks at first in an indirect way with him. The phrase: "-Καλύτερα τ' αμίλητα παρά τα μιλημένα"<sup>540</sup> that kapetan Michalis says to Polyxenis is the same phrase that in *Στο Κάστρο* Nikos' father says to him as he also attempts to inform him that he is aware of his relationship with

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<sup>536</sup> Marandis 2012: 265.

<sup>537</sup> Marandis 2012: 305.

<sup>538</sup> Marandis 2012: 316.

<sup>539</sup> Marandis 2012: 319.

<sup>540</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 214.



Gioulter and warn him about the consequences it may have.<sup>541</sup> Hence there is the verbal parallel of the same phrase that is repeated in Kazantzakis' novel which has also been placed in a context with analogous content.

Gioulter goes to Istanbul and as the years pass Kemal establishes a law that permits the Turks to marry people of other religions and thus Nikos and Gioulter marry in the end. The description of the development of the relationship of Nikos and Gioulter in Marandis' novella evokes Rotokritos and Aretousa in Kornaros' romance *Ερωτόκριτος*. Nikos met Gioulter at a young age growing to develop feelings of love like Rotokritos and Aretousa. The two works depict physical weakening as a symptom of concealed feelings of love.<sup>542</sup> The first departure of Nikos from Kastro to Phoinikia and the second sojourn in London in an attempt to forget Gioulter evoke Rotokritos' first self-exile and second banishment from Athens. The endurance and patience during the separation which ends with marriage are also common features of the two stories. As the plot develops in Kazantzakis' novel, however, Polyxingis' relationship with Emine will not resemble Nikos nor Rotokritos but Charidimos as he is depicted in Kornaros' romance.

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<sup>541</sup> Whereas Marandis' works had been celebrated at the time they were published, they have now fallen into obscurity. A question that is being raised here is how the intertextual relationship is activated when the evoked text has been culturally lost. Regarding this issue, Riffaterre has argued that "interpretation remains relatively impervious to the intertext's obsolescence because the text, as the ungrammatical reverse of a sociolectic obverse, goes on pointing to this obverse even after the latter has been effaced by time; all that is needed for communication is the postulation of the absent meaning. All that is needed for the text to function is the presupposition of the intertext. Certainly, presupposition itself cannot exist unless the reader is familiar with the structures organizing a representation of reality: but these are the very stuff of our linguistic competence". Riffaterre 1980a: 239.

<sup>542</sup> For an analysis of the symptoms of love in *Ερωτόκριτος* see Peri 1999: 61-72.

Polyxingis' and Emine's story has a tragic end as the latter will be finally stabbed by kapetan Michalis. At this stage of the story Polyxingis transforms into a figure that resembles Charidimos, the Cretan warrior in Kornaros' *Ερωτόκριτος*. In *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* there is also a shepherd named Charidimos, but it is Polyxingis that evokes Kornaros' Charidimos. Polyxingis was described as ignorant of love before meeting Emine, like Charidimos before meeting his unnamed wife. Polyxingis has only the company of his sister while Charidimos is completely alone. Charidimos marries his wife despite their different social ranking and they live a pastoral life on mount Ida. In a reworking of the myth of Cephalus and Procris she spies on him driven by jealousy and Charidimos accidentally kills her.<sup>543</sup> Charidimos serves as an *alter ego* of Rotokritos showing the tragic side of love if jealousy and suspicion intervene.<sup>544</sup>

The reaction of Polyxingis upon learning the news of Emine's death evokes Charidimos' reactions after the death of his wife. Polyxingis' friends intervene so as to prevent the mourning man from committing suicide. He then takes the decision to dedicate himself to fighting: "Είχαν βονίξει τα χωριά από το θρήνο που έστησε, μέρες πολλές τον παρακρατούσαν οι φίλοι να μη σκοτωθεί, ντύθηκε από κορφής στα μαύρα, κι από τη μέρα εκείνη έτρεχε όπου γίνονταν πόλεμος και ρίχνονταν στην Τουρκιά, τυφλός και ζητούσε το θάνατο".<sup>545</sup> Polyxingis' initial inclination to commit suicide, the intervention of the friends and the devotion to the war are all elements that recall the reaction of Charidimos to his wife's death. Charidimos' first reactions after the death of his wife are namely the following:

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<sup>543</sup> See Kriaras 1938: 109-111. Also see Holton 1996: 1-12.

<sup>544</sup> Holton 1991: 24-27.

<sup>545</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 417.

Να δη τέτοι' ανεπόλπιστο ετρόμαξε κ' εχάθη,  
και μοναχός του να σφαγή, κείνην-την ώρα βάλθη,  
και τόση πρίκα κι ο καημός τον-κρίνει και παιδεύγει,  
όπου να πάρη θάνατο με τ' άρματα γυρεύγει.  
Και τόσο το πιασε βαρύ το πράμαν, όπου γίνη,  
που δίχως άλλο να σφαγή θέλει την ώρα κείνη.  
Μα 'ρθαν και βρήκασίν-τονε οι μπιστικοί ντου φίλοι. (2.721-727)<sup>546</sup>

Moreover, Polyxingis' mood and his appearance change. He is dressed entirely in black (*ντύθηκε από κορφής στα μαύρα*) like Charidimos has a black appearance comprising black clothes, weapons and horse:

Μαύρο φαρί, μαύρ' άρματα, και μαύρο το κοντάρι,  
μαύρη 'τονε κι η φορεσά τουνού του καβαλλάρι. (2.585-586)<sup>547</sup>

In both cases the tragic end of their story is attributed to the factor of fate. Charidimos lost his wife due to ill fate ("απής κι η μοίρα ντου 'θελε έτσι να τον-πειράξη" 2.768),<sup>548</sup> while Polyxingis' meeting with Emine is also presented as fatal ("η μοίρα του το 'καμε").<sup>549</sup> Human behaviour is also taken into account as the jealousy of Charidimos' wife is recognised as a cause of the tragic end. Moreover, in *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* Polyxingis exhibited signs of blasphemy before meeting Emine while the element of jealousy characterised kapetan Michalis, his counterpart in the novel.

Overall, the story of Polyxingis begins with the employment of the device of the earthquake that is linked with folk songs narrating previous natural disasters in the

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<sup>546</sup> Kornaros 1915: 110.

<sup>547</sup> Kornaros 1915: 105.

<sup>548</sup> Kornaros 1915: 111.

<sup>549</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 116.

same town and depicting the reactions of people to it. His connection to the story of Nikos and Gioulter from Marandis' *Στο Κάστρο* introduced the possibility of him having a happy ending with Emine like Nikos and Gioulter had who are linked with Rotokritos and Aretousa. The quotation from *Ερωτόκριτος* that is found earlier in the novel (“-Τα ’μαθες, Αρετούσα μου, τα θλιβερά μαντάτα;”),<sup>550</sup> refers to the point where Rotokritos has been banished and the development of his relationship with Aretousa is jeopardized. However unlike Rotokritos and Aretousa, faith, patience and endurance are not the traits exhibited by Polyxingis and Emine. After her murder both his mood and his external appearance alter and he develops as a figure that resembles Charidimos.

*The folk song “Η αρπαγή της γυναικός του Ακρίτη” and the abduction of Emine*

Kapetan Michalis bears features that link him with the Homeric heroes in the *Iliad* and especially with Achilles. He is also the hero who has been connected with Cretan captains such as captain Michalis Korakas as he is depicted in Prevelakis' *Παντέρμη Κρήτη* (1945).<sup>551</sup> Both characters are portrayed as sullen men of exceptional military prowess but of few words and they are both likened with wild beasts. In a letter to Giannis Konstandarakis on 6 June 1954 Kazantzakis wrote: “Στην αρχή σκόπεβα να βάλω κεντρικό ήρωα τον παπού Σου τον Κόρακα’ μα ο ήρωας αφτός είναι ιστορικά γνωστός πολύ και δεν είχα δικαίωμα να του αποδόσω λόγια και πράξεις της φαντασίας”.<sup>552</sup> The most obvious divergence of the character of kapetan

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<sup>550</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 83.

<sup>551</sup> For common points between Prevelakis' presentation of kapetan Michalis Korakas and Kazantzakis' depiction of kapetan Michalis in the novel, see Mikromatis 1997: 43-63. Also see Bien 2007: 568.

<sup>552</sup> Kazantzakis 1958b: 86.

Michalis from that of Korakas is that the latter did not die in a battle but naturally at an old age.

Kapetan Michalis' deeds are also connected with the heroic folk songs of the Akritic cycle. The narration of the abduction of Emine alludes to the tradition of Greek folk songs recounting the abduction of the hero's woman. In the novel, Emine prepares to be baptised and marry Polyxenis. A few days earlier, however, the Turkish relatives of her late husband, Nouri Bey, abduct her. Kapetan Michalis is informed by Ventouzos about it, he leaves his post and flees to take her away from the Turks. During his absence the Turks burned the monastery of Christ the Lord.

Ventouzos will narrate retrospectively the story to Siphakas. His narration and his discussion with Siphakas allude to the folk song. In the collection of N. G. Politis the folk song bears the title “Η αρπαγή της γυναίκος του Ακρίτη”.<sup>553</sup> In the novel the description of Emine's abduction includes a verb that derives etymologically from the same root: *άρπαξαν την Κερκέζα*.<sup>554</sup> Siphakas asks Ventouzos to tell him the entire truth about the events and refers to his age to convince him to do so: “Μα να μου αποκριθείς αντρίστικα, ό,τι κατέχεις, γιατί εγώ ’μαι εκατό χρονών και δεν μπορώ ν’ ακούω ψευτιές. Ο Βεντούζος ψυχανεμίστηκε τι θα τον ρωτούσε ο γέρος’ έπεσε σε λογισμούς: -Θα σου πω την αλήθεια, καπετάν Σήφακα, είπε τέλος’ την πάσαν αλήθεια”.<sup>555</sup> Ventouzos proceeds to tell the truth about kapetan Michalis to Siphakas who is characterised as *γέρος*. In the folk song Akritis' father stresses the fact that his son is gone: “Της ερημιάς, της σκοτεινιάς, του γιου μου του φευγάτου” (35).<sup>556</sup> Akritis asks him to learn the truth about the abduction of his beloved and also calls

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<sup>553</sup> N. G. Politis 1914: 98-100, nr 75.

<sup>554</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 396.

<sup>555</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 395.

<sup>556</sup> N. G. Politis 1914: 99, nr 74.

him *γέροντα*: “Παρακαλώ σε, γέροντα, αλήθεια να με δώσης” (38).<sup>557</sup> In the novel the concern of Siphakas is that kapetan Michalis deserted his post *γιατί έφυγε*, while in the folk song Akritis has left and has deserted the woman (*φευγάτου*).

Then Ventouzos refers to the wedding of Emine with Polyxingis: “αποφάσισε και να τη στεφανωθεί ο κουζούλακας· θα γίνουνταν, λέει, κι αυτή χριστιανή... βάφτιση και γάμος μονομερίς, μεθαύριο του Σταυρού”.<sup>558</sup> Ventouzos then describes the actions of kapetan Michalis as he learns that Emine was being abducted by the relatives of Nouri Bey, rides his mare and runs towards them: “Πήδηξε απάνω στη φοράδα του, τρέχαμε εμείς μια δεκαριά από πίσω του, να μην τον αφήσουμε μοναχό· τα ξημερώματα προφτάσαμε τους Τούρκους απόξω από το Μεγαλόκαστρο, στο Κακόν Όροζ”.<sup>559</sup> In the folk song Akritis asks to learn if he will be able to find them in time:

τάχα θα φτάσω·ς τη χαρά, θα φτάσω και 'ς το γάμο;

-Αν έχης μαύρο γλήγορο 'ς το σπίτι τους προφτάνεις,

κι' αν είν' οκνός ο μαύρος σου, 'ς την εκκλησιά τους βρίσκεις. (39-41)<sup>560</sup>

The expression *τους προφτάνεις* that is found in the folk song is repeated in the novel by Ventouzos as he mentions that kapetan Michalis found the Turks: *προφτάσαμε τους Τούρκους*. In the folk song after finding the woman Akritis swiftly runs away with her:

Το μαύρο του χαμήλωσε κ' η κόρη απάνω ευρέθη.

Βγάλλει και το χρυσό σπαθί και ταργυρό μαχαίρι,

δίνει του μαύρου του βιτσιά κ' επήρε χίλια μίλλια,

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<sup>557</sup> N. G. Politis 1914: 99, nr 74.

<sup>558</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 396.

<sup>559</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 396-397.

<sup>560</sup> N. G. Politis 1914: 99, nr 74.

μήδε το μαύρον είδανε, μήτε τον κορνιαχτό του.

Οπού είχε μαύρο γλήγορο νείδε τον κορνιαχτό του,

κι' οπού είχε μαύρο κ' είν' οκνός, μηδέ τον κορνιαχτό του. (68-73)<sup>561</sup>

Kapetan Michalis fights ferociously with the Turks in the novel and they run away: “Έπεσε απάνω τους ο γιος σου, ολομόναχος, βρουχιόταν σα λιοντάρι, ποτέ μου δεν είδα τέτοιαν αντριγιά, καπετάν Σήφακα, γεια στα χέρια σου που έπλασες έναν τέτοιο γιο... Οι Τούρκοι τα 'χασαν, αφήκαν τη γυναίκα, γίνηκαν κουρνιαχτός!”.<sup>562</sup> The folk song emphasises the valour of Akritis with the repetition of the word *κουρνιαχτός* (*μήτε τον κορνιαχτό του-μηδέ τον κορνιαχτό του*) stressing his speed as he leaves. In the novel the word *κουρνιαχτός* is also employed describing the speed at which the Turks run away from kapetan Michalis in order to save themselves (*γινήκαν κουρνιαχτός*). Whereas this emphasises his bravery as it is the Turks who run away and not him, it also shows his lack of swiftness and at that time the Turks were burning the monastery of Christ the Lord.<sup>563</sup> These allusions relate the character of kapetan Michalis to the folk tradition of the Akritic cycle with which kapetan Siphakas and Thrasaki are also connected as we argued above in this chapter.

#### *A rewriting of Solomos' “Ύμνος εις την ελευθερίαν”*

The events will finally escalate into the battle of the Cretans against the Turks at the top of mount Selena. The description of the final battle at the end of the novel is intertextually connected to Solomos' *Ύμνος εις την ελευθερίαν* which was written in May 1823. Earlier, a quotation from Solomos' *Ύμνος εις την ελευθερίαν* is found in a

<sup>561</sup> N. G. Politis 1914: 100, nr 74.

<sup>562</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 397.

<sup>563</sup> Afterwards kapetan Michalis will kill Emine in a scene that is connected with Othello's killing of Desdemona in Shakespeare's *Othello*. See Paschalis 2010: 143-172.

dream of kapetan Michalis. In the dream there are people in a field who see musical instruments playing melodies but they are unable to hear them. Afterwards, a brave Cretan man treats them to raki and they listen to the national anthem:

Για μερικές μέρες σα να καταλάγιασαν οι Τούρκοι, κι ο καπετάν Μιχάλης μπόρεσε να κοιμηθεί στο στρώμα του. Κι είδε ένα παράξενο όνειρο: πως ήταν, λέει, μεγάλη σύναξη λαού όξω στα χωράφια, γύρα από ένα αλώνι· και μέσα στο αλώνι μουζικάντες, τρουμπέτες και νταούλια και θιαμπόλια κι έπαιζαν, λέει, τον Εθνικό Ύμνο· έπαιζαν, έπαιζαν, μα κανένας δεν μπορούσε να τον ακούσει· και τότε, λέει, πρόβαλε ένας λεβέντης Κρητικός μ' ένα μεγάλο δίσκο ρακή και ρακοπότηρα και τράτερνε· έπινε ο λαός, κι ως έπινε, άνοιγαν τ' αυτιά του, άνοιγε το μυαλό του, βροντούσε ο αγέρας: «Απ' τα κόκαλα βγαλμένη των Ελλήνων τα ιερά!...».<sup>564</sup>

Kapetan Michalis wonders what this dream might mean as it is not yet clear to him and the narrator adds that he would later understand its meaning. As we examined in chapter 2 the narrator of *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* similarly remembers the quotation of Stavridakis from folk poetry and explicitly wonders what its meaning might be providing thus the signal to the reader to investigate the intertextual connection. In the case of kapetan Michalis here, the dream is connected to the final episode of the novel and foreshadows it. In the dream a brave Cretan, who stands for kapetan Michalis, is treating the people to *ρακί*. In the final episode in the battlefield there are similes and metaphors that express the intoxication of the warriors. Kosmas is found in a state of drunkenness (“-Καλώς σε βρήκα, μπάρμπα! του αποκρίνονταν αυτός, συνεπαρμένος από ένα αλλόκοτο μεθύσι”).<sup>565</sup> Moreover, kapetan Michalis kills a Turk and the latter's blood flows like wine (“Συντριβάνισε ολομεμιάς γουργουρίζοντας το αίμα, κλουκλούτισε σα να 'ταν ο μουεζίνης ασκί κρασί και λύθηκε ο λαιμός του”).<sup>566</sup> In *Ύμνος εις την ελευθερίαν* the bodies of the

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<sup>564</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 294.

<sup>565</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 540.

<sup>566</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 540.



warriors are also connected with images of fluidity and the blood that is flowing is likened with a river: “Σαν ποτάμι το αίμα εγίνη”.<sup>567</sup>

In the dream of kapetan Michalis a line from *Ύμνος εις την ελευθερίαν* is heard: “άνοιγαν τ’ αυτιά του, άνοιγε το μυαλό του, βροντούσε ο αγέρας: «Απ’ τα κόκαλα βγαλμένη των Ελλήνων τα ιερά!...»”.<sup>568</sup> The quoted line does not include the subject *Ελευθερία* of the participle *βγαλμένη*. At the end of the novel kapetan Michalis shouts the words *Ελευτερία ή* and his phrase is not finished because a bullet pierces him. The word “freedom” that is not included in the dream is uttered here and the image of the line which says that freedom comes out of the bones is encapsulated in the description of the bullet that is coming out of kapetan Michalis’ scalp (*βγήκε από το ξερβό*).<sup>569</sup> There is also a common etymological basis of the words *βγαλμένη* and *βγήκε* that underscores the connection of the novel’s final lines with the quoted line from *Ύμνος εις την ελευθερίαν*.

During the battle, Kosmas thinks that his ancestors who have fought and died in war in the past have come alive: “Ξύπνησαν στο σπλάχνο τους ο κύρης του, ο βαρύς πολεμάρχος, οι παππούδες του, η Κρήτη... Δεν είναι η πρώτη φορά που πολέμησε, χιλιάδες τώρα χρόνια πολεμάει, χιλιάδες φορές σκοτώθηκε κι αναστήθηκε, πήρε χόχλο το αίμα του”.<sup>570</sup> Similarly, *Ύμνος εις την ελευθερίαν* includes the image of the resurrection of the warriors who had been killed by the Turks and dance in the battlefield inspiring the warriors to fight courageously:

Τόσοι, τόσοι ανταμωμένοι

Επετιούντο από τη γη,

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<sup>567</sup> Solomos 1961: 83. Stanza 72.

<sup>568</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 294.

<sup>569</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 541.

<sup>570</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 537-538.

Όσοι ειν' άδικοα σφαγμένοι

Από τούρκικην οργή.<sup>571</sup>

Kosmas is entirely dedicated to the battle and he has forgotten his previous wandering and concerns: “δεν έμενε μπροστά του παρά ετούτο το ένα, το παμπάλαιο χρέος”.<sup>572</sup> His devotion is comparable to the warriors in Solomos' poem whose attention is fixed to their duty:

Γι' αυτούς όλους το παν είναι

Μαζωμένο αντάμα εκεί.<sup>573</sup>

Moreover, during the battle Kosmas is in a blissful state that seems unlikely during the circumstances (“σκοτεινή, ανεξήγητη χαρά τον είχε συνεπάρει”)<sup>574</sup> just like in *Υμνος εις την ελευθερίαν* the warriors derive happiness from war (“είναι χαρά”<sup>575</sup>).

The Cretans decide to proceed to the battle although they know that they are fewer in number than the Turks in Kazantzakis' novel and in *Υμνος εις την ελευθερίαν* the Greek warriors are also unconcerned about the amount of the Turkish forces (“Δεν ψηφούν τον αριθμό”).<sup>576</sup> Kapetan Michalis continues fighting despite the wounds as the warriors in *Υμνος εις την ελευθερίαν* disdain the feeling of pain (“Δεν αισθάνονται τον κόπο”)<sup>577</sup>. In his final moments before death kapetan Michalis' face bears a light about which the narrator addresses an array of rhetorical questions: “άγρια λάμψη πéréχυσε το πρόσωπό του. Χαρά 'ταν ετούτη απάνθρωπη, περφάνια, πείσμα θεοτικό

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<sup>571</sup> Solomos 1961: 79. Stanza 50

<sup>572</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 540.

<sup>573</sup> Solomos 1961: 81. Stanza 62.

<sup>574</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 540.

<sup>575</sup> Solomos 1961: 94. Stanza 141.

<sup>576</sup> Solomos 1961: 84. Stanza 77.

<sup>577</sup> Solomos 1961: 82. Stanza 67.

για καταφρόνια του θανάτου; Για αγάπη για την Κρήτη αβάσταχτη;”.<sup>578</sup> The device of rhetorical questions is used in *Ύμνος εις την ελευθερίαν* (stanzas 93-95) by the poet when he describes the battle and refers to the unearthly light of religion.<sup>579</sup> Moreover, the word *λάμψη* which is employed in the novel to describe kapetan Michalis’ face is also included in *Ύμνος εις την ελευθερίαν*:

Λάμπιν έχει όλη φλογώδη  
Χείλος, μέτωπο, οφθαλμός.<sup>580</sup>

In *Ύμνος εις την ελευθερίαν* the figure that bears this light is Christ as becomes apparent in stanza 98 (“Εγώ είμ’ Άλφα, Ωμέγα εγώ”).<sup>581</sup> In Kazantzakis’ novel, kapetan Michalis after presenting this luminous image is killed and the bullets form the pattern of the cross.<sup>582</sup> *Ύμνος εις την ελευθερίαν* also ends with an image of the cross that is formed by the soldiers:

Ω ακουσμένοι εις την ανδρεία!...  
Καταστήστε ένα σταυρό,<sup>583</sup>  
“Τούτο ανίσως μελετάτε,  
Ιδού, εμπρός σας τον Σταυρό`  
Βασιλείς! ελάτε, ελάτε,  
Και κτυπήσετε κι’ εδώ”.<sup>584</sup>

The final words of the novel present the image of the dispersal of the brain of kapetan Michalis on the stones (*σκόρπισαν οι μυαλοί του στις πέτρες*). The key-words

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<sup>578</sup> Kazantzakis 2010b: 541.

<sup>579</sup> See Mackridge 1989: 64-65.

<sup>580</sup> Solomos 1961: 87. Stanza 95.

<sup>581</sup> Solomos 1961: 87. Stanza 98.

<sup>582</sup> Beaton 1998: 208.

<sup>583</sup> Solomos 1961: 96. Stanza 151.

<sup>584</sup> Solomos 1961: 97. Stanza 158.

μυαλοί, σκόρπισαν and πέτρες are verbal parallels that repeat words from *Ύμνος εις την ελευθερίαν* in images of the body's dismembering and dispersion that appear recurrently also in Solomos' poem: "Με ολοσκόρπιστα μυαλά",<sup>585</sup> "Και πεσμένα εις τα χορτάρια",<sup>586</sup> "Κάθε πέτρα μνήμα ας γένη".<sup>587</sup>

Overall, at the end of *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* the allusions to *Ύμνος εις την ελευθερίαν* culminate. There are common images and connections in the description of the spiritual strength and the physical condition of the warriors. The repetitions in the novel of key words from Solomos' poem operate as intertextual markers which indicate the connection of the two literary works. The intertextual connection links the Cretan battle with the Greek war of independence and it can be said that it foreshadows the impending liberation of Crete.

### *Conclusions*

In this chapter we examined two types of intertextuality, namely the quotations that are detected in the words of the characters and the allusions that are found in the narrative. The quotations of the characters mainly derive from the vernacular tradition. Their characteristic is that they are usually expressed by the characters as they sing them. They are folk songs, Rigas' battle hymns, *μαντινάδες*, and parts of *Ερωτόκριτος* that had been set to music. Broadly speaking, there is compatibility between the cultural background of the characters and the quotations that they make. The people express themselves as parts of a community of ideas and beliefs through direct quotations from its components.

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<sup>585</sup> Solomos 1961: 82. Stanza 65.

<sup>586</sup> Solomos 1961: 84. Stanza 81.

<sup>587</sup> Solomos 1961: 90. Stanza 115.

The narrative allusions to previous works create implicit connections that are detected in multifaceted ways. There are key-words, images and episodes that are related to earlier works. Names of the characters may allude to previous texts like the name Paraskevas alludes to Kosmas Politis' *Eroica*. The last chapter of the novel can be read as a rewriting of Solomos' *Ύμνος εις την ελευθερίαν*. The subtitle (*Ελευτερία ή Θάνατος*) places the novel within a tradition of works developing the theme of freedom which culminated in Solomos' poem. In the middle of the novel there is a quotation from the poem and at the end there are allusions to it through key-words, and analogies in the imagery and style. Through this extensive and versatile intertextual connection with Solomos' poem the Cretan liberation is foreseen although it is not described in the novel.

In *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* we detect allusions to texts that belong to a variety of cultural traditions and literary genres. Kazantzakis' novel is related to an array of works that share common themes such as the depiction of Megalo Kastro in the folk tradition drawing attention to the narrative place of the novel. Moreover, *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* alludes to the *Iliad* and also to *Eroica*, a modernist novel which also alludes extensively to Homer's epic. Kazantzakis' novel includes allusions to Kornaros' *Ερωτόκριτος* as well as to Marandis' *Στο Κάστρο*, a novella which in its turn has connections with *Ερωτόκριτος* and also contains references to Kazantzakis himself. Through the narrative allusions the novel is related to works from a wide nexus of genres and traditions but there are also links that unite them as they are juxtaposed within the context of the novel.

## 5. Tradition and innovation: *The Last Temptation*

The aim of this chapter is to explore components of the novel that had been developed in the Modern Greek tradition and examine the convergences and divergences of the novel with it. The chapter consists of sections that examine the earlier treatment of the figure of Jesus in the Greek folk tradition and also in the poetry of Kostas Varnalis and more specifically in *To φως που καίει*. Significant concepts that are developed in the novel such as the issue of the “temptation” are examined in connection with Solomos’ *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι*. The characters of Lazarus, Judas and Magdalene are also examined in relation to earlier Modern Greek literature. What this chapter suggests is that the novel on the one hand expands themes that had previously been developed in the Modern Greek cultural tradition but on the other hand in many instances it adds a new twist introducing innovations.

In Genette’s terminology, the novel can be characterised as a “hypertext” whose “hypotext” is the *New Testament*, notably the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Moreover, historical sources and research on Jesus have been exploited.<sup>588</sup> Kazantzakis used to engage in extensive research and reading before commencing the writing of a literary work. Regarding *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* he had stated in a letter to Knös in 1951 that he had consulted historical sources about the life of Jesus and chronicles about his era. He also added that he was acknowledging the right to the author to diverge from history as “ποίησις φιλοσοφώτερον

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<sup>588</sup> For the connection of the novel *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* with the four gospels and the historical research about Jesus see Tatum 2005: 19-33.

ιστορίας”.<sup>589</sup> Kazantzakis approached the story of the life of Jesus as a literary author and extended the existing literary tradition. In worldwide literature Jesus’ life has been handled through various approaches.<sup>590</sup> In this chapter our aim is to explore the relation of the novel to Modern Greek literature.

### *The Greek folk tradition*

In *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* a transitional era is described which anticipates the ending of the pagan world and the emergence of the Christian religion. At the beginning of chapter 15 this transition is illustrated through the metaphor of a building that is demolished and a new one that is being constructed:

Κι ο ακατάδεχτος Ιεχωβά ζώστηκε πάλι την πέτσινη ποδιά του Πρωτομάστορα, πήρε ξανά το αλφάδι και το μέτρο, κατέβηκε στη γης κι άρχισε να γκρεμίζει κι αυτός τα περασμένα και να χτίζει μαζί με τους ανθρώπους, τα μελλούμενα· και πρώτα πρώτα άρχισε από το Ναό των Οβραίων στην Ιερουσαλήμ. Στέκουνταν κάθε μέρα ο Ιησούς στο αιματοραντισμένο πλακόστρωτο, κοίταζε τον παραφορτωμένο ετούτο Ναό κι ένιωθε την καρδιά του να τον σφυροκοπάει και να τον γκρεμίζει.<sup>591</sup>

The metaphor depicts Jehovah constructing the past and the future like a master-builder. The characteristic word *πρωτομάστορας* evokes the folk song “Του γιοφυριού της Άρτας”. In this song the master-builder and his craftsmen attempt to build a new bridge but the parts that they build during the day fall down in the night: “Όλημερίς το χτίζανε, το βράδυ εγκρεμιζόταν”.<sup>592</sup> The master-builder’s wife however

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<sup>589</sup> Kazantzakis writes to Knös (13 November 1951): “Ένα χρόνο έπαιρνα από τη Βιβλιοθήκη της Cannes όλα τα βιβλία, που γράφηκαν για το Χριστό, το Ταλμούδ κλπ. κι έτσι όλες οι λεπτομέρειες είναι ιστορικά σωστές· αν κι αναγνωρίζω στον ποιητή το δικαίωμα να μην ακολουθάει δουλικά την ιστορία· «ποίησης φιλοσοφώτερον ιστορίας»...”. E. Kazantzaki 1977: 591.

<sup>590</sup> See Ziolkowski 1978.

<sup>591</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 370-371.

<sup>592</sup> N. G. Politis 1914: 130, nr 89.

must be sacrificed so that the construction of the bridge can be successful. When the master-builder sees his wife arriving to be built in the foundation so that the bridge will stay firm, his heart metaphorically breaks: “Την εἶδ’ ὁ πρωτομάστορας, ραγίζεται ἡ καρδιά του”.<sup>593</sup> In *Ὁ Τελευταῖος Πειρασμός* Jesus just like the master-builder is looking at the pagan temple and feels hammers in his heart that make him collapse as if he was a building (“κι ἐνίωθε τὴν καρδιά του νὰ τον σφυροκοπάει καὶ νὰ τον γκρεμίζει”).<sup>594</sup> Jesus’ plight is caused by the fact that each day he sees the building firm in contrast to the master-builder who repetitively finds the building demolished.

The social and historical context of the novel revolves around the enslavement of Jerusalem by the Romans. Judas, who anticipates the liberation of Jerusalem, is described at the beginning of the novel as counting his followers for this cause. In order to refer to his followers he uses the words *αντράκια, χαμαντράκια* (“Πόσοι εἴμαστε; εἶπε· δώδεκα· ἓνας ἀπὸ τὴν κάθε φυλὴ τοῦ Ἰσραὴλ. Διαόλοι, ἀγγέλοι, αντράκια, χαμαντράκια, ὅλες οἱ γέννες κι οἱ ἀποβολές τοῦ Θεοῦ, διαλέγετε καὶ παίρνετε!”),<sup>595</sup> “Ὅλοι μαζί, διαόλοι, ἀγγέλοι, αντράκια, χαμαντράκια, ὅλοι χρειάζονται στο μεγάλο μας σκοπό, ἀπάνω του, μωρὲ παιδιά!”<sup>596</sup>). The use of these words (*αντράκια, χαμαντράκια*) is detected in Cretan folk songs which recount the siege of Vienna:

-Ἐχω κ’ ἐγὼ αντράκια, χαμαντράκια.

Καὶ παίζουν ἐπιδέξια τὰ σπαθάκια».

Χρυσὸ Σταυρὸ βάνει ’ς τὴ κεφαλὴ τοῦ

’Σαν καὶ τὸν ἥλιο ἐλάμπε τὸ κορμὶν τοῦ.

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<sup>593</sup> N. G. Politis 1914: 131, nr 89.

<sup>594</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 371.

<sup>595</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 18.

<sup>596</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 19.



Ελάτε Χριστιανοί μου ευλογημένοι  
εις του Χριστού την πίστη μπιστεμμένοι.  
Τση Βιέννας τση καϋμένης να βοηθούμε,  
και 'μέρα νύχτα στέκει να χαθούμε. [...] <sup>597</sup>

In this way the word *χαμαντράκια* that stems from the Cretan dialect is incorporated into the novel. In *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* the introduction and juxtaposition of these words as well as their placement in a context of enslavement and war evoke the Cretan folk song.

Another folk song with which *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* is connected is “Της Αγιά Σοφιάς”. The imagery and vocabulary in the description of the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans in the last chapter of Kazantzakis’ novel evoke the siege of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 as it is recounted in “Της Αγιά Σοφιάς”. The novel focuses on the first reactions of the people who are informed that the city has been set on fire. Believing that the city has the privilege of a divine protection, at first they deny accepting the historical fact: “Δεν καίγεται η άγια πολιτεία, δεν έχει φόβο η άγια πολιτεία, σε κάθε της καστρόπορτα κι ένας Άγγελος με τη ρομφαία!”. <sup>598</sup> In this passage each gate of Jerusalem is depicted as protected by an angel just as each bell of the cathedral of Hagia Sophia corresponds to a priest and a deacon in the folk song: “κάθε καμπάνα και παπάς, κάθε παπάς και διάκος”. <sup>599</sup>

Moreover, in *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* voices are heard during the siege asking for the intervention of God (“Φωνές άγριες ακούστηκαν!”, “Φώναζαν το Θεό να προβάλει”). <sup>600</sup> Jesus then speaks explaining that it is God’s will that the city will be

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<sup>597</sup> Kriaris 1920: 44-46.

<sup>598</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 495.

<sup>599</sup> N. G. Politis 1914: 4, nr 2.

<sup>600</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 495.

lost. He tries to console the women who cry by elaborating on the nature of time and adds that the historical events are in a state of flux: “Τι κλαίτε; Τους είπε με συμπόνια. Τι αντιστέκεστε στο θέλημα του Θεού; Ακούστε το λόγο που θα σας πω και μην τρομάξετε: Φωτιά ’ναι ο Καιρός, γυναίκες αγαπημένες, φωτιά ’ναι ο καιρός κι ο Θεός κρατάει τη σούβλα και γυρίζει κάθε χρόνο κι από ένα πασχαλιάτικο αρνί. Ετούτο το χρόνο, το πασχαλιάτικο αρνί είναι η Ιερουσαλήμ, τον άλλο θα ’ναι η Ρώμη, τον άλλο...”.<sup>601</sup> In the song a supernatural voice is heard explaining to people that the loss of Constantinople has been determined by God:

φωνή τους ήρθε εξ ουρανού κι’ απ’ αρχαγγέλου στόμα.

«Πάψετε το χερουβικό κι’ ας χαμηλώσουν τ’ άγια,

παπάδες πάρτε τα γιερά, και σεις κεριά σβηστήτε,

γιατί είναι θέλημα Θεού η Πόλη να τουρκέψη. (8-11)<sup>602</sup>

The verbal parallels of *φωνή-φωνές* and *θέλημα Θεού* function as intertextual threads and signal the connection of the novel with the folk song. The women in the novel are asked by Jesus not to weep as time has a circular and repetitive nature and historical events are in a state of flux, just like in the folk song Mary is asked not to cry since with the passage of time the historical conditions may alter:

Η Δέσποινα ταραχτηκε, κ’ εδάκρυσαν οι εικόνες.

«Σώπασε, κυρά Δέσποινα, και μη πολυδακρύζης,

πάλι με χρόνους, με καιρούς, πάλι δικά σας είναι». (16-18)<sup>603</sup>

Through the connection of the novel with the folk song the narration of the siege of Jerusalem is connected with the siege of Constantinople. The novel’s

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<sup>601</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 495.

<sup>602</sup> N. G. Politis 1914: 4, nr 2.

<sup>603</sup> N. G. Politis 1914: 5, nr 2.

narrative time, when the pagan world ends and the Christian culture of the Byzantine Empire emerges, is linked with the folk song's narrative time that marks the ending of the Byzantine Empire. It has been observed in chapter 3 that the descriptions of the refugees regarding the fall of their village to the Ottomans in *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* allude to the same folk song, "Της Αγιά Σοφιάς". Moreover, the words of the characters reflect their aspirations regarding the recapture of the city and contain legends regarding the waking up of the last emperor, Palaiologos, who will send the Ottomans back to Kokkini Milia. This ideology, however, is not supported by the narrator who recounts their words with irony showing thus the distance of his perceptions from them. In *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* the allusions to the folk song are detected in a context that develops a similar theme regarding the first reactions of the people during the siege of the city but Jesus presents here a sober perception pertaining to the cyclical character of historical events.

In the novel Mary, who seems unable to perceive Jesus' divine mission, watches the crucifixion of a man whose cross had been constructed by Jesus. The mother of the crucified man curses Jesus to have the same fate and to be crucified: "Την κατάρα μου, είπε αργά, βραχνά, την κατάρα μου, γιέ του Μαραγκού, κι όπως σταύρωσες, να σταυρωθείς!".<sup>604</sup> Moreover, the zealot's mother also curses Mary to see Jesus being crucified. Then the curse haunts Jesus and appears to him throughout the novel like a recurrent leitmotif. The curse is viewed by Jesus as a guide and as a reminder of his duty: "Άξαφνα άκουσε πάλι τις μυστικές πατούσες, που τόσο καιρό, ανήλεες, τον ακολουθούσαν· έστησε το αυτί, αφουκράστηκε· αυτές ήταν: γοργές, βαριές, αποφασισμένες· μα δεν πήγαιναν τώρα πίσω του· πήγαιναν μπροστά και τον οδηγούσαν... «Καλύτερα», συλλογίστηκε, «καλύτερα· τώρα πια δεν μπορώ να χάσω

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<sup>604</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 57.

το δρόμο»”.<sup>605</sup> In the fourth chapter of *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* the crucifixion of the zealot is described. While the gypsies are fixing the nails on the zealot, Jesus feels pain at his hands, legs and the heart. After the zealot’s mother curses Jesus, then the gypsy laughs and expresses his expectation that Jesus will also be crucified: “Και ο άλλος γύφτος γέλασε: -Και στα δικά σου, μάστορα! του ’καμε και του χτύπησε τη ράχη φιλικά”.<sup>606</sup> The final chapters of the novel contain Jesus’ crucifixion. At the end of chapter 29 when Jesus is on the cross, the narrator says that the nails are not being placed by gypsies but by an array of angels from heaven: “Δεν ήτανε τούτοι γύφτοι που κάρφωναν το σταυρωμένο, πλήθος άγγελοι είχαν κατέβει από τον ουρανό, κρατούσαν σφυριά και καρφιά, φτερούγιζαν γύρα από τον Ιησού, ανεβοκατέβαζαν τα σφυριά χαρούμενοι και κάρφωναν τα χέρια, τα πόδια, κι άλλοι έδεναν σφιχτά το κορμί του σταυρωμένου με χοντρά σκοινιά, να μην πέσει’ κι ένας μικρός άγγελος, με τριαντάφυλλο μάγουλα, με χρυσές μπουκλές, κρατούσε μια λόγχη και λόγγιζε την καρδιά του Ιησού”.<sup>607</sup> Instead of gypsies there are angels that place the nails on the hands, legs and the heart of Jesus. Jesus then faints and the dream sequence begins.

The lamentation of Mary has been treated in the Byzantine tradition, notably in Romanos Melodos’ kontakion *Mary at the Cross*, in troparia by Leo VI, the work of Joseph the hymn writer, the *Επιτάφιος Θρήνος* and the laments of *Acta Pilati*. There are also vernacular Byzantine and post-byzantine laments of Mary in *Θρήνος της Υπεραγίας Θεοτόκου εις την Σταύρωσιν του Δεσπότη Χριστού* and the lament that depicts Mary’s descent to the underworld in *Κρητική Αποκάλυψις της Θεοτόκου* and

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<sup>605</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 308-309.

<sup>606</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 57.

<sup>607</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 452.

also dramatisations as in Marinos Phalieros' *Θρήνος εις τα Πάθη και τη Σταύρωσιν Χριστού* and the Christian tragedy *Χριστός Πάσχων*.<sup>608</sup>

The *New Testament* mostly revolves around Jesus and while being on the cross he sees Mary and introduces his disciple John as her son.<sup>609</sup> There are Modern Greek folk songs that depict the reactions of Mary and emphasise her human nature. They mostly focus on Mary instead of Jesus in comparison to the four gospels that mainly depict the events revolving around Jesus. The Greek folk tradition includes songs about the crucifixion of Jesus that are performed on Good Friday and recount the reactions of Mary and her lament.<sup>610</sup> In the Greek folk songs Mary is depicted to be heading to Golgotha where Jesus is being crucified. On her way she observes a gypsy producing nails. When she asks him what the nails are for he replies that he is going to place them on the hands, the legs and the heart of Jesus:

Παίρνουν το δρόμο το δρομί, τ' αργυρομονοπάτι,  
το μονοπάτι τσ' έβγαλε στ' ατσίγγανου την πόρτα.  
«Καλώς τα κάνεις, μάστορη, και τι 'ναι αυτά που φκιάνεις;  
-Ένανε θα σταυρώσουμε και τα καρφιά του κάνω.  
Εμένα μ' είπαν τέσσερα και εγώ τα κάνω πέντε.  
-Πες μου, τζάνη μ' μάστορη, και τι τα θέλεις πέντε;  
-Εγώ που τα παράκοψα θα τα διαμοιράσω.  
Τα δυο βάνουμ' στη χούφτα του, τα δυό στα γόνατά του,  
το τρίτο το φαρμακερό το βάνουμ' στην καρδιά του,

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<sup>608</sup> On the laments of Mary in the Greek tradition see Romainos 1954: 188-225. Also see M. Alexiou 1975: 111-140 and M. Alexiou 2002: 62-78.

<sup>609</sup> For an analysis of Mary in the *New Testament* see Brown, Donfried, Fitzmyer, Reumann (eds) 1978: 206-218.

<sup>610</sup> There are numerous versions of folk songs about the lament of Mary. For a bibliography see Stamouli-Sarandi 1934/1937: 253.

να δράμη αίμα και χολή, να πικραθή η καρδιά του». (58-67)<sup>611</sup>

In *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* the nails are placed on Jesus by the angels as opposed to the gypsy. In the novel Jesus and Mary are cursed by the mother of the zealot because Jesus created the cross on which the zealot was crucified. The folk songs also contain a curse as Mary encounters the gypsy. Whereas in the novel the zealot's mother curses Mary, in the Greek folk tradition it is Mary who curses the gypsy because he created the nails for the crucifixion of Jesus. Mary says:

«Καταραμένε, ατσίγγανε, ποτέ να μη χιλιάσης,  
όπου και αν πας και όπου σταθής κατάσταση μη πιάσης,  
σταχτίσα στη γωνίτσα σου ποτέ να μη ποτάξης.  
Τα χείλια σου τα κόκκινα ποτέ να μη γελάσουν,  
τα μάγουλα σ' τα κόκκινα και κείνα να μαυρίσουν». (72-76)<sup>612</sup>

In the novel Jesus faints while he is on the cross. In the Greek folk songs the theme of fainting is also present. However, in the folk tradition while Jesus is being crucified it is Mary who is repetitively fainting. It is characteristic that the line “Σαν τ' άκουσε η Δέσποινα, πέφτει λιγοθυμάει” is repeated three times (52, 68, 89).<sup>613</sup> In the song Jesus asks Mary to do the *παρηγοριά* and tells her that his crucifixion will be succeeded by his resurrection.

In the novel while Jesus faints the last temptation occurs. It is described in chapters 30 to 33 and revolves around a dream in which he experiences the life of an ordinary man avoiding the crucifixion. He produces children with Martha and grows old. This dream is a divergence of the novel from the ancient gospels. In the Greek

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<sup>611</sup> Singollitis 1934/1937: 255.

<sup>612</sup> Singollitis 1934/1937: 255-256.

<sup>613</sup> Singollitis 1934/1937: 255.

popular tradition there are songs which depict the attempts of Jesus to escape his persecutors before his crucifixion. Moreover, in the folk songs Jesus proceeds to a metamorphosis in order to avoid the crucifixion and just like the novel some people view him like an old man while others see him like a child:

«Αυτός είναι και πιάστε τον, γλήγορα μη σας φύγη».

Ο Χριστός σαν τ' άκουσε, πολύ βαρύ τον ήλθε

πέντε λογιού εγένηκε να μη τον εγνωρίσουν.

Άλλοι τον βλέπουν σαν μωρό και άλλ' τον βλέπουν γέρο. (41-44)<sup>614</sup>

Overall, it can be said that *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* develops elements that had been introduced in the Greek folk tradition. Features that are present in the folk songs and are also detected in the novel are Mary's human reactions, the concept of curse in juxtaposition to crucifixion, the figure of the gypsy, the image of nails at the heart of the crucified Jesus, his reluctance to be crucified and his metamorphosis as an old man. The correspondences are traced in the events of the plot, in the imagery and in the depiction of the characters but at the same time *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* also includes twists that renew the previous works.

#### *Lazarus and vrikolakes*

*Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* includes the resurrection of Lazarus by Jesus but its treatment diverges from the *New Testament*. In the novel Lazarus' resurrection and his physical condition afterwards are presented in resemblance to the features of *βρικόλακες* as they have been described in the Greek folk and literary tradition. When Lazarus is introduced in the novel the first feature that is mentioned about him is his

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<sup>614</sup> Stamouli-Sarandi 1934/1937: 250.

weak physical condition: “ένας άνθρωπος χλωμός, ξεπνεμένος, χίμηξε μέσα και σωριάστηκε ομπρός στη φωτιά”.<sup>615</sup> While he is still alive the condition of his health fluctuates between life and death. His physical characteristics lack vividness: “Ανασηκώθηκε, έτρεμε· χαμαδός, χλεμπονιάρης, με κρεμάμενα φλασκιασμένα μάγουλα· και τα μάτια του, ξεβαμμένα πράσινα [...]”.<sup>616</sup> Moreover, his short life is paralleled with the oil that is running short: “Απόκαμε ο Λάζαρος να μιλάει, σωριάστηκε πάλι χάμω· όλοι σώπαιναν· τσίριξε το λυχνάρι, τρεμόπαιξε να σβήσει, σηκώθηκε η Μάρθα, το γέμισε λάδι πήρε απάνω του”.<sup>617</sup> This state of the health of Lazarus foreshadows his impending death. During his resurrection in the novel the earth is shaking and then Lazarus exits the tomb (“ακούσαμε μέσα στο μνήμα το χώμα να κουνιέται”, “βγήκε, ήταν ο Λάζαρος”).<sup>618</sup> This description conveys the imagery and vocabulary that are found in *The New Testament* in the description of the resurrection of Lazarus: “ην δε σπήλαιον, και λίθος επέκειτο επ’ αυτώ. Λέγει ο Ιησούς. Άρατε τον λίθον” (John’s Gospel 11.38-39), “Λάζαρε, δεύρο έξω. Και εξήλθεν ο τεθνηκώς” (John’s Gospel 11.44). In the Greek folk tradition the same expression and imagery is found in the song “Του νεκρού αδελφού” when Kostandis rises: “η γης αναταράχτηκε κι’ ο Κωσταντής εβγήκε”.<sup>619</sup> Kostandis has been linked with *βρικόλακες* by writers and editors of collections of folk songs. In the version of the folk song that is included in the 1876 edition of Jeannarakis *Άσματα Κρητικά* the folk song bears the title “Ο καταχανάς”.<sup>620</sup> In Kriaris’ collection of Cretan folk songs published in 1920 the song has been given the title “Ο Καταχανάς ή το καλό

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<sup>615</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 277.

<sup>616</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 277.

<sup>617</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 278.

<sup>618</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 375, 376.

<sup>619</sup> N. G. Politis 1914: 139, nr 92.

<sup>620</sup> Jeannarakis 1876: 229-231, nr 293.



πουλί”.<sup>621</sup> Argyris Ephtaliotis published in 1894 in *Εστία* the play *Ο Βουρκόλακας* which was a reworking of the folk song and also the story of the same song is the theme of Photos Politis’ play entitled *Ο Βρικόλακας* (1908).<sup>622</sup> However, the difference in the case of Kostandis is that he returns to life because he is committed to a sacred oath that he has to accomplish whereas the return of a *βρικόλακας* is associated with negative intentions.

The request to the dead to rise is a motif that is also found in Greek laments:

Σήκ’ απάνου, μην κοιμάσαι,  
το Θεό μην τον φοβάσαι.  
-Πώς να σηκωθώ η καημένη,  
που είμαι χάμου ξαπλωμένη;  
Τα ματάκια μου κλεισμένα,  
τα χεράκια μου δεμένα [...]. (1-6)<sup>623</sup>

The affinity of the novel with folk poetry is detected in its imagery and motifs and also in its metre. The novel conveys the image of the movement of the ground in an iambic seven-syllable: “το χώμα να κουνιέται”.<sup>624</sup>

In *The New Testament* when Lazarus is resurrected he is depicted as wearing gauzes but there are no details regarding his general physical condition. Tertullian in his theological treatise on the resurrection *De Resurrectione Carnis* referred to the body of Lazarus as demolished, dismembered and dissolved.<sup>625</sup> Kazantzakis was acquainted with the work of Tertullian and his message to the Vatican when *O*

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<sup>621</sup> Kriaris 1921: 221-224.

<sup>622</sup> See Ioannou (ed.) 1989: 22-23.

<sup>623</sup> Saunier 1999: 212, nr 11β.

<sup>624</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 375.

<sup>625</sup> Tertullian, *De Resurrectione Carnis*, 53. For an analysis of the resurrection of the body in Western Christianity (200-1336) see Bynum 1995: 34-43.

*Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* was included in the Index of Forbidden books, he quoted Tertullian's phrase "Ad tuum, Domine, Tribunal apello". Tertullian in his theological treatise on the resurrection lays emphasis on the corruption of the body of Lazarus after the resurrection and he distinguishes it from his spirit which was uncorrupted:

For in Lazarus, the pre-eminent instance of resurrection, it was the flesh which lay down in weakness, the flesh which all but decayed into dishonour, the flesh which meanwhile stank to corruption: and yet as flesh Lazarus rose again-along with the soul indeed, but that soul uncorrupt, which no one had bound with linen bands, no one had placed in a sepulchre, no one had perceived to be stinking, no one had seen buried four days before.<sup>626</sup>

*Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* includes the portrayal of Lazarus' physical condition after his resurrection on the grounds that Lazarus had been dead for four days and his body was in a state of decomposition. In Kazantzakis' novel the decay of the body of Lazarus is reflected but not a purgation of his soul as Tertullian suggests. After the resurrection Lazarus is between life and death ("ο αναστημένος ετούτος βολόδερνε ακόμα ανάμεσα στη ζωή και στο χάρο").<sup>627</sup> He is depicted as a living corpse whose presence disturbs the order of human society. After his resurrection Lazarus attracts the attention of the villagers who observe him as a supernatural phenomenon: "Ανοιχτό 'ταν το σπίτι του Λάζαρου κι οι χωριανοί μπαινόβγαιναν να δουν και ν' αγγίξουν τον αναστημένο, ν' αφουγκραστούν αν αναπνέει, αν μιλάει, αν αλήθεια είναι ζωντανός για μπας κι είναι φάντασμα; Κι αυτός κάθουνταν στην πιο μέσα γωνία του σπιτιού, γιατί τον πείραζε το φως, κουρασμένος και λιγομίλητος· τα πόδια του, τα μπράτσα του, η κοιλιά του ήταν πρησμένα, πρασινισμένα, σαν τεσσάρων μερών

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<sup>626</sup> Tertullian, *De Resurrectione Carnis*, 53. 3, 4. Translation by E. Evans in Evans 1960: 157.

<sup>627</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 398.

νεκρός”.<sup>628</sup> The odour that Lazarus has after his return to life is that of incense: “Μυρίζε τώρα μονάχα χωματίλα και λιβάνι”.<sup>629</sup>

The features of *βρικόλακες* are presented in Christos Christovasilis’ short story *Η αλώπη* (1908) and also in Andreas Karkavitsas’ *Αφορεσμένος* (1887).<sup>630</sup> A characteristic work from Modern Greek poetry that presents the countenance and actions of *βρικόλακες* is Valaoritis’ poem “Θανάσης Βάγιας” (1867).<sup>631</sup> After his death Vagias visits his wife and explains to her the physical condition of *βρικόλακες*, their behaviour as well as their sufferings by the humans. In Kazantzakis’ novel Lazarus whose skin has become green due to the lack of the element of life (“πρασινισμένα”) resembles Vagias as he is depicted in Valaoritis’ poem:

Πως είσαι πράσινος... μυρίζεις χώμα...

Πες μου δεν έλυσες, Θανάση, ακόμα;<sup>632</sup>

Moreover, Lazarus is carrying worms on his body (“τα μικρά σκουληκάκια της γης που ’χαν καθίσει απάνω του”),<sup>633</sup> just like Vagias:

Λίγο συμάζωξε το σάβανό σου...

Σκουλήκια βόσκουνε στο πρόσωπό σου.

Θεοκατάρατε, για ιδές, πετάνε,

κ’ έρχονται επάνω μου για να με φάνε.<sup>634</sup>

Lazarus’ body seems to be in process of decomposition: “Μα εκεί που τον ταρακουνούσε, το μπράτσο του Λάζαρου απόμεινε στο χέρι του. Τρόμος έπιασε το

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<sup>628</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 380.

<sup>629</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 380.

<sup>630</sup> For a study of *βρικόλακες* in Modern Greek literature see Mouzakis 1989: 116-132.

<sup>631</sup> Paraschos (ed.) 1954: 3-8.

<sup>632</sup> Paraschos (ed.) 1954: 5.

<sup>633</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 380.

<sup>634</sup> Paraschos (ed.) 1954: 5.

Βαρραβά, πέταξε το σαπημένο μπράτσο στ' ανθισμένα σπάρτα, έφτυσε αναγουλιασμένος".<sup>635</sup> Similarly, members from Vagias' corpse are falling apart in Valaoritis' poem:

Πέφτουν στο δρόμο μας και ξεκολλάνε

τα κούφια κόκκαλα, στη γη σκορπάνε [...]

-Φεύγα και σκιάζομαι τ' άγρια σου μάτια.

Το σάπιο κρέας σου, πέφτει κομμάτια.

Τραβήξου, κρύψε τα, κείνα τα χέρια.

Απ' την αχάμνια τους λες κ' είν' μαχαίρια.<sup>636</sup>

Barabbas as well as Vagias' wife proceed to kill Lazarus and Vagias. In this way both works include the macabre paradox of killing someone who is already dead. In *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* Lazarus is finally killed by Barabbas who explicitly calls him *βουρκόλακα*: "Να με συμπαθάς, βουρκόλακά μου".<sup>637</sup> After the murder of Lazarus by Barabbas, Jesus attempts in his dream to make up for the unsuccessful resurrection. He takes the place of Lazarus in the house of his sisters and becomes Mastro-Lazaros. However, even in the dream Jesus is unable to replace the dead Lazarus and utters: "-Δεν είμαι ο Λάζαρος, βρε παιδιά, μη φοβάστε' πάει αυτός! Μονάχα που με λένε κι εμένα Λάζαρο, μαστρο-Λάζαρο κι είμαι μαραγκός [...]"<sup>638</sup>

Jesus is also linked with the character of Lazarus since he will pass through death in order to be resurrected after his crucifixion. As he explains to Judas: "Αν δεν πέθαινε το σπυρί το σιτάρι, θ' ανασταίνονταν ποτέ του αστάχυ; Όμοια κι ο Γιός του

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<sup>635</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 422.

<sup>636</sup> K. Paraschos (ed.) 1954: 6-7.

<sup>637</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 421. For the variations of the word in areas of Greece see Mouzakis 1989: 157-162. Also see Menardos 1925: 297-301.

<sup>638</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 473.

ανθρώπου [...] –Θυμήσου το Λάζαρο... έκαμε πάλι ο Ιησούς. Μα ο Ιούδας αναγούλιασε και πήρε δρόμο, φτύνοντας”.<sup>639</sup> Here it is clear that Judas is opposed to Lazarus’ resurrection. Perhaps this presentation of Judas’ view directs the reader for the interpretation of the role of Lazarus. The resurrection of Lazarus is not depicted as the glory of Jesus in the novel. Jesus cannot save Lazarus and after his return to life as a *βρικόλακας* he dies for a second time. Hence the success of the impending resurrection of Jesus that is linked with the resurrection of Lazarus is also questioned.

### *Judas in the Greek tradition*

The Christian hero that was traditionally linked with *βρικόλακες* is not Lazarus but Judas. In *The New Testament* Judas kills himself.<sup>640</sup> Menardos and Mouzakis have characterised Judas as the first Christian *βρικόλακας* citing a description by Papias of the survival of Judas after his attempt to commit suicide remaining thus in a state between life and death.<sup>641</sup>

In *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* Judas is presented in a different way. The description of the physical appearance of Judas in Kazantzakis’ novel focuses on his red beard. He is introduced as a red-beard and this element becomes a metonymy: “ο κοκκινογένης είχε σταθεί”<sup>642</sup>, “ο κοκκινογένης έσκυψε”,<sup>643</sup> “-Άπιστε Θωμά, έκαμε ο κοκκινογένης και τον άρπαξε από το σβέρκο”,<sup>644</sup> “Μα ο κοκκινογένης στράφηκε”,<sup>645</sup>

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<sup>639</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 396.

<sup>640</sup> Matthew 27, 3-10.

<sup>641</sup> Menardos 1925: 300-301. Also Mouzakis 1989: 64. For a discussion of the presence of Judas’ suicide in narrations of the folk tradition see Megas 1944: 21-24.

<sup>642</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 15.

<sup>643</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 16.

<sup>644</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 17.

<sup>645</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 24.

“ο κοκκινογένης τον κόχενε με μάνητα”.<sup>646</sup> Pavlos Vlastos published in 1893 a collection of Cretan folk songs, proverbs and *μαντινάδες* about Cretan customs entitled *Ο Γάμος εν Κρήτη*. We know from Kazantzakis’ letters to Prevelakis that he had read it and that he had made efforts to aid the publication of the collected works of Vlastos pertaining to laographia.<sup>647</sup> In this book there is a section that includes verses regarding the correspondences of a man’s physical features with his character. There is one that indicates the connection of the red beard to the spirit of Judas:

Κόκκινα γένεια και μάθια γαλανά,  
καρδιά του Ιούδα, ψυχή του Σατανά.<sup>648</sup>

Vlastos’ collection includes a proverb in which the *σπανός* is viewed from an unfavourable perspective: “Βλέπε με Θε’ μ’ από σπανό”.<sup>649</sup> In *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* the distinctive physical feature of Thomas is that he is beardless: “Στρίγγλιζε ο σπανός, πονούσε· ο κοκκινογένης τον ακούμπησε κάτω στη γης”.<sup>650</sup> Although Vlastos’ collection includes a variety of proverbs regarding the physical appearance, those that are placed within a religious context are included in the novel. The proverb about the red-beard man refers explicitly to Judas and Satan and the one about the beardless man (*σπανός*) is addressed to God.

In the novel Judas has become the counterpart of Jesus. It is emphasised that the one needs the other so as to accomplish their vocation. Moreover, in Kazantzakis’ novel Judas is described as a rebel with social and national aspirations for the liberation of Jerusalem. Judas’ ideological position is that the road of salvation is not to be found in heaven but on earth. He supports the cause of the national freedom of

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<sup>646</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 24.

<sup>647</sup> Prevelakis 1984a: 234.

<sup>648</sup> Vlastos 1893: 26.

<sup>649</sup> Vlastos 1893: 26.

<sup>650</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 18.

Israel against the Romans and confronts Jesus for seeking a spiritual freedom and not the national liberty. During his gradual evolution Jesus will reach the stage of “son of David” and he will embrace Judas’ revolutionary politics. In Modern Greek literature these features of Judas had been developed in Spiros Melas’ play *Ιούδας* (1934).<sup>651</sup>

Judas, who is the protagonist of Melas’ play, envisages the national freedom of Israel and differentiates himself from Jesus whose preaching involves the kingdom of heaven. Judas views Jesus as the leader of the people and expresses the revolutionary politics that will later be found in *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός*.<sup>652</sup> In Kazantzakis’ novel the lack of national freedom is opposed to the endeavour of Jesus to achieve a personal and spiritual kind of freedom. The quest for national freedom through war on the one hand and for spiritual freedom on the other hand is encapsulated in the worldview of Judas and Jesus. In the following dialogue they reveal the kind of freedom that they pursue:

-Αυτό ζητώ κι εγώ, Ιούδα αδερφέ μου· ελευτερία.

Ο κοκκινογένης τινάχτηκε· φούχτωσε τον Ιησού από τον ώμο: -Να λευτερώσεις τον Ισραήλ από τους Ρωμαίους; φώναξε κι η αναπνοή του έκαιγε.

-Να λευτερώσω την ψυχή από την αμαρτία.<sup>653</sup>

Jesus seeks the freedom of the soul whereas Judas anticipates the freedom of the nation just as in Melas’ play Judas soon realises that Jesus was not promising a struggle against the Romans in war but a transcendental kingdom of heaven:

ΓΙΟΥΔΑΣ: Είχα πιστέψει πως μιλάει για επανάσταση, για λευτεριά του Ισραήλ... Κι’ ακούγοντας τώρα για βασιλεία των ουρανών, θάρρεψα πως ήθελε μ’ αυτό ν’ αποκοιμίσει τους Ρωμαίους, τους σπιούνους, τις αρχές, την εξουσία.

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<sup>651</sup> Melas 1934.

<sup>652</sup> Melas 1934: 62-63.

<sup>653</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 204.

ΓΙΕΣΣΕ: Και τώρα υποψιάζεσαι πως δεν είναι γι' αυτό;

ΓΙΟΥΔΑΣ: Κάτι χειρότερο! Αρχίζω νάμαι βέβαιος... Ο καιρός περνάει και δε βλέπω καμιά ετοιμασία σοβαρή... Κι' αυτό το κήρυγμά του όσο πάει σα να ξεκολλάει από τη γη... και σα να λιώνει μες στα σύννεφα... Κάθομαι απάνω στα καρφιά, δεν ξαίρω τι να κάμω...<sup>654</sup>

Melas' play contains the confrontation between Judas and Jesus that stresses the clash of their ideologies. It is presented as two parallel monologues. While Jesus' voice is heard presenting his preaching at the crowd, Judas' thoughts intervene as he expresses his own comments regarding Jesus' words. In this way their different views emerge:

Η ΦΩΝΗ ΤΟΥ ΙΗΣΟΥ: Μακάριοι οι κατατρεγμένοι για δικαιοσύνη, γιατί είναι γι' αυτούς η βασιλεία των ουρανών!

ΓΙΟΥΔΑΣ: Μακάριοι όσοι μπορούν να την παίρνουνε με το σπαθί τους' γιατί είναι γι' αυτούς η βασιλεία της γης!<sup>655</sup>

Jesus in *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* argues in his discussion with Judas that the foundation of man is the soul just like in Melas' play Judas refers to the metaphor of the foundations of an edifice: "ΓΙΟΥΔΑΣ: Απ' τα θεμέλια σιέται ο ναός' αν εκείνος δεν αφανιστεί, το έργο τούτο, που πύργωσε η αρετή του Σολομώντα κι' αιώνες δούλεψαν να το στολίσουν, ρημάδια θα γίνει... θα σωριαστεί για πάντα!".<sup>656</sup> Judas refers to his disappointment that Jesus does not accomplish the mission of a social justice and national liberty as he had first believed ("Η καρδιά μου σκίζεται, ματώνει' ο στεναγμός γίνηκε για μένα η φυσική ανάσα' ο σπαραγμός καθημερινός μου σύντροφος... Μα στέκει απάνω απ' όλα η σωτηρία του λαού!...").<sup>657</sup> He also

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<sup>654</sup> Melas 1934: 175.

<sup>655</sup> Melas 1934: 180-181.

<sup>656</sup> Melas 1934: 210-211.

<sup>657</sup> Melas 1934: 212.



expresses his indifference to the way that he will be treated in the future historical accounts of his role as long as he accomplishes his goal:

Η ιστορία!... Δεν είμαι από κείνους που πιστεύουν πως στέκει όλη στον αφρό, στη φλούδα των πραγμάτων, στο θέατρο κάποιων περιστατικών, στον κούφιο πάταγο των ονομάτων! Πάω πιο μέσα, γέροντα! Στην καυτερή ουσία της· στη φύτρα της την ίδια· εκεί που γίνεται το έργο αληθινά και ο εργάτης πάει άφαντος ή παραμορφωμένος! Η μοναχή μου έγνοια είναι ο σκοπός· αυτόν θέλω να σώσω, κι' αντί της ευλογίας του λαού, έχω την κατάρα!<sup>658</sup>

In *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* on the other hand in the final temptation of Jesus, it is Paul who will express his indifference to the truth of the events. For Paul significance is not given to the essence of the events but to the way that they are recorded in history.

Another theme that is developed in Melas' play is Judas' and Magdalene's erotic encounters while the latter finally abandons him in order to follow Jesus. In *Ιούδας* Magdalene is also tempted by Jesus and after waking up from her ecstatic vision she declares that the spirit has to overcome the flesh in order to be saved.<sup>659</sup> In *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* Judas is the one who finally confronts Jesus about the abandonment of his vocation in the final scenes of the vision until he wakes up from it and accomplishes his mission.

#### *Jerusalem liberated: the interludes of Erofilis*

In *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* the final chapters depict the vision of Jesus during his crucifixion. He enters into a realm where he has an affair with Magdalene and then lives with Martha and Maria. He grows old, has children and there is a demon

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<sup>658</sup> Melas 1934: 216.

<sup>659</sup> Melas 1934: 128.

accompanying him who fulfills his wishes. At the end of the vision he is confronted by his disciples because he has betrayed them and he has abandoned his duty. An analogous theme in an imaginative re-creation of the world of the crusades has been developed in the interludes of *Erofili*, whose source is Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*. In the interludes of *Erofili* the crusaders have been sent by God to liberate Jerusalem from the Turkish rule. The Christian champion Rinaldo, however, has been enchanted by Armida and he lives with her among demons that have been disguised as birds and maidens. The Crusaders Carlo and Ubaldo manage to enter the garden and confront Rinaldo. Carlo accuses Rinaldo of neglecting his divine duty in Jerusalem and becoming a girl's soldier. He considers fear or magic to be the reasons of the abandonment of his goals:

Όσοι πιστεύγου στο Χριστό, κι όσοι τον προσκυνούσι,  
τώρα στα Γεροσόλυμα για κείνο πολεμούσι·  
και συ, Ρινάλδο, κείτεσαι 'ς ανάπαυσι μεγάλη  
'ς τούτο τον τόπο το χωστό 'ς τσ 'Αρμίντας την αγκάλη·  
κ' οι κόσμοι, απ' όλοι στ' άρματα μούγουνται και τρομάσσουν,  
να σε σαλέψου δε μπορού, στρατιώτη 'νους κοράσιου·  
ποια λησμονιά σε πλάκωσε, ποια μάγια σ' εσκοτίσα,  
ποιοι φόβοι τόσοι δύναμι σε φόβον εγυρίσα; (2.107-114)<sup>660</sup>

After listening to the words of Carlo, Rinaldo regrets his former abandonment of his mission and leaves the magical realm of Armida.

Τώρα δοξάζω το Θεό, πως λεύτερος γυρίζω,  
κ' εις είντα σφάλμαν άμετρο εστέκουμου γνωρίζω. (2.129-130)<sup>661</sup>

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<sup>660</sup> Chortatsis 1928: 65-66.

At the end the crusaders kill the Turkish opponents and they recover Jerusalem. In *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* Jesus' disciples also manage to enter into the enchanted realm of Jesus. Especially Judas confronts him directly and accuses him of cowardice and betrayal: “-Προδότη! μούγκρισε πάλι λιποτάχτη! Το πόστο σου ήταν απάνω στο σταυρό· εκεί σ’ έβαλε ο Θεός του Ισραήλ να πολεμήσεις· μα σ’ έκοψε κρύος ιδρώτας, και τη στιγμή που ασκώθηκε μπροστά σου ο θάνατος, που φύγει φύγει! Έτρεξες και χάθηκες στα φουστάνια της Μάρθας και της Μαρίας, κιότη!”.<sup>662</sup> Rinaldo is expected to fight for God along with the people of Jerusalem and Jesus' post is perceived to be on the cross according to his divine calling. After speaking with Judas and the disciples Jesus realises that he should have been crucified: “Τώρα το νιώθω, χάθηκα! Ναι, ναι, έπρεπε να σταυρωθώ, λιποψύχησα, έφυγα...”.<sup>663</sup> Rinaldo was a soldier who deserted his calling and returned to it. Jesus in the novel gradually acquires a spiritual strength which he seems to lose in the temptation episode but becomes ready to proceed to his calling after it.

#### *Varnalis' “Το φως που καίει”*

The figure of Jesus as well as Magdalene and Mary are also included in Varnalis' *Το φως που καίει*. The first edition of *Το φως που καίει* was in 1922 and in 1933 it appeared in a revised form.<sup>664</sup> It is a synthesis that combines theatrical and poetical elements and consists of three parts which are connected by the intermediary comments of the writer. The first part of *Το φως που καίει* that is entitled “Ο μονόλογος του Μώμου” is in prose and constitutes a theatrical “monologue” where

<sup>661</sup> Chortatsis 1928: 66.

<sup>662</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 501-502.

<sup>663</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 505.

<sup>664</sup> For the variations of the text in the two editions see Dallas 1988: 35-47.

the speakers are Momos, Prometheus and Jesus. At the end of this part it is revealed that the “monologue” has been a product of Momos’ imagination. The second part which is entitled “Ἰντερμέδιο” includes four poems that are laments of the water nymphs Oceanides, the Seraphim, Mary, and Magdalene. The third part comprises three poems. The first one is the song of Aristeia and the monkey that describes the three stages of Aristeia’s dematerialisation. Then, follows the poem of the leader and the last poem is the song of the people who celebrate the rising of a new blissful world.

The human side of Jesus is explored in the second part of *Το φως που καίει* in the laments of Magdalene and Mary. The human side of Jesus was emphasised in Renan’s *Vie de Jésus* that Kazantzakis had used as a source but there is also a tradition of Modern Greek literary works that had explored this aspect before the production of *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* as the case of Varnalis’ *Το φως που καίει* shows.<sup>665</sup> In the poem “Μαγδαληνή” in the second part of *Το φως που καίει* the heroine refers to the shift in her life after she met Jesus. Magdalene asserts that although Jesus’ disciples and the rest of people saw him as the divine son of God she detected his human side and his psychological plight (*σπαραγμό*). Therefore she does not imagine a posthumous salvation for him and she argues that Jesus needs her in order to be saved:

Κανείς (και πλήθη και σοφοί και μαθητάδες και γονιοί)  
δεν ξάνοιγε το σπαραγμό στα θάματά σου πίσω  
κι αν πρόσμενες το λυτρωμό σου από την άδικη θανή,  
εγώ μονάχα το νιώσα, που είμουνα λάσπη και κοινή,

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<sup>665</sup> See Bien 2005: 3-18.

πόσο Χριστέ σουν άνθρωπος! Κ' εγώ θα σ' αναστήσω!<sup>666</sup>

Jesus' relationship with women is an important theme that *To φως που καίει* and *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* explore. In *To φως που καίει* Magdalene asserts that Jesus will not find salvation through death but through her. In the novel Magdalene encourages him to stop seeking salvation in the spiritual world: “-Τι κίνησες να κυριέψεις τον ουρανό και στέναζες και ζητούσες το αθάνατο νερό; Εγώ 'μαι το αθάνατο νερό, έσκυψες, ήπιες, γαλήνεψες”.<sup>667</sup> Furthermore, the two works explore the idea of Jesus leading a domestic life with his family and children. In the poem “Η μάνα του Χριστού” in the second part of *To φως που καίει* Jesus is presented from the viewpoint of his mother who does not consider him to be the divine son of God or a man of action but she imagines him like a peaceful family man. Mary imagines Jesus' domestic life and she depicts him growing old in a red house with his family. In this way Jesus' heritage would be his humble possessions, namely the herd, the land and the workshop that he would leave to his children and grandchildren:

Ένα κόκκινο σπίτι σ' αβλή με πηγάδι...

και μια δράνα γιομάτη τσαμπιά κεχριμπάρι...

νοικοκύρης καλός να γυρνάς κάθε βράδι,

το χρυσό, σιγαλό και γλυκό σαν το λάδι. [...]

Κι ο κατόχρονος θάνατος θα φτανε μέλι

και πολλή φύτρα θα φηνες τέκνα κι αγρόνια

καθενού και κοπάδι, χωράφι κι αμπέλι,

τ' αργαστήρι εκείνού, που την τέχνη σου θέλει.<sup>668</sup>

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<sup>666</sup> Varnalis 1956: 69.

<sup>667</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 459.

<sup>668</sup> Varnalis 1956: 64-65.

In *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* Mary's wish is to see Jesus conducting the life of an everyday, common man:

Άνθρωπο τον θέλω σαν όλους, όχι παραπάνω, όχι παρακάτω, σαν όλους. Να μαστορεύει κι αυτός, όπως μια φορά κι ο κύρης του, σκάφες, κούνιες αλέτρια, τα συγγύρια του σπιτιού, κι όχι σαν και τώρα, σταυρούς, να σταυρώνει τους ανθρώπους. Να παντρευτεί μια νοικοκυροπούλα από τίμιο σπίτι, με προίκα, και να 'ναι καλοσυναισθητής, να κάμει παιδιά και να βγαίνουμε κάθε Σάββατο, όλοι μαζί, γιαγιά, παιδιά, κι αγγόνια, στο σεριάνι, να μας καμαρώνει ο κόσμος.<sup>669</sup>

Her wish is to persuade Jesus to abandon his metaphysical pursuits and become an ordinary man. However, Mary's aspirations are not fulfilled and they remain vain wishes: “Μα αλίμονο, όσο πήγαινε ο καιρός μαδούσαν οι ελπίδες της, κακό δρόμο έπαιρνε ο γιος της, όλο και ξεμάκραινε από τη στράτα των ανθρώπων”.<sup>670</sup> In contrast to Mary's hopes Jesus' goals lead him away from a life that would revolve around everyday matters: “βαριέστισε κι αυτός μέσα στο σπίτι ετούτο με τους γεροπαράλυτους και τις απαρηγόρητες μανάδες και τις ταπεινές, καθημερινές αρμήνιες –φάε, δούλεψε, παντρέψου! Φάε, δούλεψε! Παντρέψου!”.<sup>671</sup> Jesus will experience the ordinary life that Mary imagines for him during his dream which constitutes the last temptation: “Περνούσαν οι μέρες, οι μήνες, τα χρόνια, πληθαίνουν στο σπίτι του μαστρο-Λάζαρου οι γιοι κι οι θυγατέρες· παραβγαίνουν η Μάρθα με τη Μαρία ποια θα γεννήσει πιο πολλά. Κι ο άντρας πότε στο αργαστήρι του παλεύει [...] πότε στα χωράφια παλεύει με τους ανέμους, με τα τυφλοπόντικα, με τις τσουκνίδες και γυρίζει αποσταμένος το δειλινό και καθίζει στην αυλή του”.<sup>672</sup> However Jesus grows old and leads a human life only in the dream. As soon as he returns to reality he follows his duty and is crucified. In *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* Maria realises that her life with Jesus and Martha as a family has only been a dream (“όνειρο όλα ετούτα”,

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<sup>669</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 68.

<sup>670</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 39.

<sup>671</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 37.

<sup>672</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 478.

“Τα ’πλασε ο Πειρασμός να μας πλανέσει’ πήρε ύπνο και θάνατο κι αγέρα και τα ’πλασε...”<sup>673</sup> Similarly, in *Το φως που καίει* Mary admits that the image of Jesus as a family man that she described was merely a dream: “είταν όνειρο κ’ έμεινεν, άχνα και πάει”.<sup>674</sup> Hence, the two literary works explore the human side of Jesus on the one hand but on the other hand the possibility of him following the life of an ordinary human is rejected as it appears only in the form of dream and vapour (*όνειρο, άχνα-αγέρα*).

The convergences and divergences of the two texts in terms of the depiction of a humanised aspect of Jesus are extended to the perceptions that the two characters have regarding themselves. In the first part of *Το φως που καίει* Jesus remains fixed to his divine duty and he appears to be indifferent to the temptation. *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* focuses on a different aspect of Jesus. In the novel Jesus gradually develops during the unfolding of the plot. Whereas Jesus in *Το φως που καίει* rejects the temptations directly without being affected by them, Jesus in *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* is first threatened by them and then overcomes them. A characteristic case is their opposite reaction when they both encounter a nightingale whose song celebrates the beauties of life. In the first part of *Το φως που καίει* the discussion of Momos, Jesus and Prometheus is interrupted by the song of the nightingale. The nightingale is influenced by the moonlight (“μ’ αστροφεγγιές ολόβαθες”) and odors (“χίλια αρώματα”) and sings a song that has a lasting and penetrating effect:

Ερωτοφύσημα κ’ εγώ το λαμπερό σου φλούδι

το σπάω με το τραγούδι.<sup>675</sup>

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<sup>673</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 479.

<sup>674</sup> Varnalis 1956: 64.

<sup>675</sup> Varnalis 1956: 44.

The bird also says that death cannot overshadow its song that revolves around the joys of life. When Jesus is asked by Momos if he could perceive the meaning of the nightingale's words and therefore embrace life, Jesus says that what he can only hear is God's will. Jesus asserts that he is unaffected by the songs: “δε θέλω να καταλάβω τίποτες από τραγούδια”.<sup>676</sup> He also adds that “όποιος ακούει πολύ τα έξω χάνει την ψυχή του”.<sup>677</sup>

In *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* Jesus also listens to the song of the nightingale that has been charmed by the moon and the smells of nature: “είχε μεθύσει από το πολύ φεγγάρι, από τις ανοιξιάτικες μυρωδιές”.<sup>678</sup> The song of the nightingale corresponds to the inner world of Jesus making his thoughts diverge from his duty: “Κελαηδούσε, κι ο Ιησούς έτρεμε· δεν κάτεχε πως είχε τόσα πλούτη μέσα του και τόσες αφανέρωτες, γλυκές πολύ, χαρές κι αμαρτίες· άνθισαν τα σπλάχνα του, περιπλέχτηκε το αηδόνι στ' ανθισμένα κλώνια, δεν μπορεί πια, δε θέλει πια να φύγει. Πού να πάει; γιατί να φύγει; ετούτη η γης είναι η Παράδεισο”.<sup>679</sup> Although Jesus is carried away due to the song of the nightingale, he returns to reality when he hears the voice of Judas. Hence, in *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* Jesus is not as fixed to his vocation as is Jesus in *Το φως που καίει*. In the temptations that he encounters he seems to be carried away by them at first but then he follows his duty.

Another example that highlights the divergence between Jesus in *Το φως που καίει* and *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* is the description of the episode in the desert. The common source is the *New Testament* as in Matthew's gospel (4.1-11) Jesus is described as facing a series of temptations by the devil during the forty days that he

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<sup>676</sup> Varnalis 1956: 45.

<sup>677</sup> Varnalis 1956: 45.

<sup>678</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 441.

<sup>679</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 441.



spent in the desert. In the reworking of this episode in *Το φως που καίει* Jesus exhibits a physical as well as spiritual strength indifferent to the temptations: “Έμεινα ολονήστικος σαράντα μέρες. Ακίνητος στην ίδια βουνοκορφή, ενώ γύρα μου τα πουλιά, τα νερά, ο αγέρας σπαρταρούσαν από κέφι και χαρά... Είταν ο Πειρασμός. Μα εγώ δεν έβλεπα, δεν άκουγα, δε σάλεβα. Ο εαφτός μου -το Χρέος μου- σκέπαζε τα πάντα”.<sup>680</sup> Here Jesus seems to be fixed to his vocation and his duty overshadows the temptations. In *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός*, however, Jesus does not show this self-assurance. When he enters the desert he considers the possibility of dying: “άλλα άρματα από την αγάπη δεν έχω· με αυτά κίνησα να παλέψω, βόηθα με! [...] Και τότε μονάχα θα σηκωθώ, να βγω έξω από το αλώνι ετούτο, να γυρίσω στους ανθρώπους, αν τέτοια η προσταγή του· να πεθάνω, αν τέτοιο το θέλημά του· ό,τι θέλει, μα να ξέρω. Στ’ όνομα του Θεού! Διπλογονάτισε απάνω στην πέτρα, με το πρόσωπο προσηλιακά, κατά τη μεγάλη έρημο”.<sup>681</sup> Jesus uses a military vocabulary to refer to his struggle against the temptations. He refers to the arms that he carries with him (*άρματα*) to fight (*παλέψω*) against evil powers on a threshing floor (*αλώνι*) which may result in his death. The words that Jesus employs evoke the battle of Digenis against Charos before his death as it is recounted in the Greek folk songs:

κ’ εγώ μονάχος πέρασα πεζός κι’ αρματωμένος [...]  
 με κράζει να παλέψωμε σε μαρμαρένια αλώνια,  
 κι’ όποιος νικήση από τους δυο να παίρνη την ψυχή του. (13, 21-22)<sup>682</sup>

In this way Jesus’ efforts to confront the temptations are emphasised.

In *Το φως που καίει* the Christian myth about the crucified Jesus and the pagan myth of the nailed Prometheus are juxtaposed. The dialogue that Momos imagines

<sup>680</sup> Varnalis 1956: 46.

<sup>681</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 252.

<sup>682</sup> N. G. Politis 1914: 105, nr 78, B’.

between Jesus and Prometheus elucidates their opposing viewpoints. Jesus seems to represent the soul while Prometheus exemplifies the common mind. In *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* Judas is the character who is the counterpart of Jesus. The character of Judas remains stable throughout the novel and he has an active participation in the national cause. On the contrary, Jesus who initially has a passive and fearful attitude develops in order to reach his spiritual duty.<sup>683</sup>

The creator of the discussion of the two opposite types in *Το φως που καίει* is Momos. His role is that of a sophist as Prometheus characterises him.<sup>684</sup> At the end Momos reveals that the words of the characters were a product of his imagination creating antithetical symbols. As Momos says: “Όλα τούτα είτανε πλάσματα της φαντασίας μου, ένα ξέσπασμα και ξαλάφρωμα του στοχασμού μου! Μου αρέσει κάπου-κάπου να μιλάω μοναχός μου. Να χωρίζω τον εαυτό μου σε λογής αντίθετα σύμβολα και να τα βάζω να μαλλώνουνε”.<sup>685</sup> In *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* Paul’s perceptions regarding the appropriation of the religious figures in his text recall Momos’ approach in *Το φως που καίει*. Paul argues just like Momos that the writer has the power to create the life, words and actions of the religious figures even if they do not correspond with the reality. Paul states: “Τελώ σαν απόστολος· εγώ θα γίνω απόστολός σου, θες δε θες· εγώ θα φτιάσω εσένα και τη ζωή σου και τη διδασκαλία σου και τη σταύρωσή σου και την ανάσταση, όπως εγώ θέλω· δε σε γέννησε ο Ιωσήφ, ο μαραγκός από τη Ναζαρέτ, σε γέννησα εγώ, ο Παύλος, ο γραφιάς, από την Ταρσό της Κιλικίας”.<sup>686</sup> Momos and Paul’s words constitute self-referential comments on the act of writing. The creators of the stories reveal that they do not conform to the reality

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<sup>683</sup> On the antithetical characters of Jesus and Judas see Beaton 2009: 114-126.

<sup>684</sup> Varnalis n.d.: 26.

<sup>685</sup> Varnalis 1956: 52.

<sup>686</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 489.

but only to what they want (“μου αρέσει”, *Το φως που καίει*) or will (“όπως εγώ θέλω”, *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός*).

Momos imagines the dialogue of Jesus and Prometheus while he sits on a bridge between the past and the future. The depiction of the ending of the past and the emergence of the future is developed in the third part of *Το φως που καίει* that celebrates the dawn of the new world. In the poem “Οδηγητής” the leader’s words encapsulate the voice of the people. The leader expresses a revolutionary attitude offering knives to the people but at the end of the poem he preaches peace and the friendship of humanity. In the final poem of *Το φως που καίει* entitled “Ο Λαός” the people are set against the rulers and celebrate the coming of the new world in which they have the power. The monkey and Aristea who represent the old world fall in a tomb and a new sun rises. The poem criticises the idealism of religion and depicts the emerging of a new world that is ruled by the people in a state of a friendship of humanity. Varnalis writes as a committed Marxist, an ideology that Kazantzakis had shared but no longer did when he wrote the novel.

Jesus engages in the revolutionary politics that are expressed by the leader and the people in the third part of *Το φως που καίει* when he reaches the third stage of his course, namely when he acts as the son of David. In *Το φως που καίει* the leader rejects the messiah who descends from the clouds:

Δεν κατεβαίνω από τα νέφη,  
γιατί δε μ’ έστειλε κανείς  
Πατέρας, τάχα παρηγόρια  
για σένα, σκλάβε, που πονείς.<sup>687</sup>

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<sup>687</sup> Varnalis 1956: 86.

Similarly, in *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* the words of Jesus as son of David convey the view of the leader in *Το φως που καίει* as he also rejects the story regarding his descent from the clouds and the idealism that it encompasses: “όχι ιδέες και σύννεφα και βασιλείες των ουρανών· πέτρες και χώματα και κρέατα το βασίλειό μου”.<sup>688</sup> Jesus at this stage renounces the message of peace and calls people in social action that is symbolised by the sword and knife: “Δεν ήρθα, φώναξε, να φέρω ειρήνη στον κόσμο, παρά μαχαίρι!”.<sup>689</sup> The knife is also a symbol that is employed in *Το φως που καίει* and it represents the revolutionary politics that the leader promotes:

Δε δίνω λέξεις παρηγόρια,

δίνω μαχαίρι σ’ ολουνούς.<sup>690</sup>

In the final poem of *Το φως που καίει* the people address the rulers (“Ο Αρχοντας”) of the old, dying world and accuse them of dishonesty (*ατιμία*) and injustice (*άδικα*) towards the people who were trying to earn their living:

Να σούρνεσαι στα τέσσερα να βγάνεις το ψωμί σου

και της δουλειάς την ατιμία να μολογάς τιμή σου.

Για να μην ψάχνεις άδικα να μας δαγκώσεις ξαφνικά.<sup>691</sup>

In *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* Jesus also confronts the rulers and demands the end of injustice, dishonesty and hunger: “Ακούστε, πλούσιοι, φώναξε, ακούστε, άρχοντες του κόσμου ετούτου, δεν μπορεί πια να βαστάξει η αδικία, η ατιμία, η πείνα!”.<sup>692</sup> The divergence of Jesus in Kazantzakis’ novel from the leader in Varnalis’ poem is that whereas the words of the leader express unanimously the voice of masses, the social action of Jesus in *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* proves unsuccessful.

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<sup>688</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 264.

<sup>689</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 378.

<sup>690</sup> Varnalis 1956: 87.

<sup>691</sup> Varnalis 1956: 90.

<sup>692</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 378.

Varnalis' *Σκλάβοι Πολιορκημένοι* (1927, 1956) also includes an appropriation of the figures of Mary and Judas. Aspects of the passion of Christ are depicted through Mary and Judas in "Οι πόνοι της Παναγιάς" and in "Η αγωνία του Ιούδα" that treats the betrayal of Judas. Jesus' crucifixion is depicted in "Η τιμωρία του Ανόμου". In "Η μάνα του Χριστού" of *Το φως που καίει* emphasis is given on the crucifixion of Christ and in "Οι πόνοι της Παναγιάς" in *Σκλάβοι Πολιορκημένοι* the attention of the poem shifts to the birth of Jesus. The poem derives material from *Η Θυσία του Αβραάμ* and Mary's lament from the folk songs of Good Friday.<sup>693</sup> In Varnalis' "Η αγωνία του Ιούδα" of *Σκλάβοι Πολιορκημένοι* Judas refers to the denial of Jesus to be the leader of a revolution. Judas underscores his view that the true essence does not exist in an ideological, metaphysical world. This theme will be also treated in Melas' *Ιούδας* and in Kazantzakis' *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός*. Varnalis in "Η τιμωρία του ανόμου" depicts a dialogue of the body and the soul and proposes a synthesis of the two elements. Varnalis' *Σκλάβοι Πολιορκημένοι* alludes to Solomos' *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι*. Moreover, Varnalis had published treatises on the poetic work of Solomos. In *Ο Σολωμός χωρίς μεταφυσική* (1925) he approached Solomos' poetry from an anti-idealistic perspective. This view is detected in the appropriation of Solomos in the poetry of Varnalis.<sup>694</sup> In Kazantzakis' *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* the development of Jesus' dualism and the temptations that he gradually overcomes allude to Solomos' *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι* as it will be argued in the following section.

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<sup>693</sup> See Dallas 1988: 107.

<sup>694</sup> For the studies of Varnalis on Solomos and the correspondences of Varnalis' poetry with the work of Solomos see Dallas 1988: 149-189.

*Temptation in Solomos and Kazantzakis*

The contrast between national subjugation and personal freedom in *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* is also an important aspect of *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι* as is evident in the oxymoron in the poem's title. At the beginning of the novel the long history of slavery and unsuccessful revolts in Judaea is encapsulated in the visual image of the bones of the dead and also in the acoustic image of the alteration of silence and cries. These images connect the novel with Solomos' *Ύμνος εις την ελευθερίαν*. Below are the openings of *Ύμνος εις την ελευθερίαν* and *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός*:

1. Σε γνωρίζω από την όψη

που με βία μετράει τη γη.

2. Απ' τα κόκαλα βγαλμένη

των Ελλήνων τα ιερά.

4. Άργειε νάλθη εκείνη η μέρα,

Και ήταν όλα σιωπηλά,

Γιατί τάσκιαζε η φοβέρα

Και τα πλάκωνε η σκλαβιά.

7. Κι έλεες: πότε, α! πότε βγάνω

το κεφάλι από τς ερμιές;

Και αποκρίνοντο από πάνω

Κλάψες, άλυσες, φωνές.<sup>695</sup>

Φώναζε, αλάκερη, με τα κόκαλα

των πεθαμένων, με τις ρίζες των

δέντρων, η γης του Ισραήλ.

Κάμποση ώρα σιωπή· κι άξαφνα

πάλι, μα όλο παράπονο τώρα,

όλο θυμό: «Ως πότε; ως πότε;»

ξανακούστηκε η κραυγή να σκίζει, από

τη γης στον ουρανό, τον αγέρα.<sup>696</sup>

<sup>695</sup> Solomos 1961: 71-72. My underline.

<sup>696</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 14. My underline.

The longing of the Jews and the Greeks respectively for freedom stems from the past as the bones of the dead attest and covers the present environment through cries that range from the earth to the sky. Key words that demonstrate the connection of the two works are the verbal parallels of *φώναζε-φωνές*, *σιωπή-σιωπηλά*, and the repetition of *πότε*. Moreover, the question “Ως πότε” echoes the beginning of Rigas’ *Θούριος* “ως πότε παλικάρια, θα ζούμε στα στενά”. The common theme of these passages is that they summon the warriors to fight for a war of independence.

Solomos’ *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι* recounts the second siege of Mesolongi by the Turks from May 1825 to March 1826. Both works present the achievement of the spiritual goal as a gradual process of overcoming physical and spiritual obstacles. Emphasis is placed on the depiction of the power of the will of the characters who are tempted by strong powers. The novel sheds light on the dualism of Jesus and shows that his final spiritual victory was the product of a painstaking evolution. According to Middleton *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* is a mythopoetic account of process thought: “For Hamilton and Kazantzakis, Jesus’ messianic self-understanding is not given to Jesus by God through some unique means of grace at the beginning of his life”.<sup>697</sup>

The title of Kazantzakis’ novel evokes the title of the section “Ο Πειρασμός” in the third draft of *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι*. The characters are led to spirituality through a culmination of physical and spiritual hardships and temptations. In his notebooks Kazantzakis represents this course as a scale of four levels which are labelled as “Son of the Carpenter”, “Son of Man”, “Son of David”, and “Son of God”.<sup>698</sup> Similarly, Solomos in his notes on the poem wrote that the struggles of the

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<sup>697</sup> Middleton 2000: 73.

<sup>698</sup> Bien 2007: 439.



heroes until death have the form of a climax: “Guarda di determinare gradatamente come scala di difficoltà da superarsi da quei grandi, in tutto quanto i sensi assorbono dalle cose esterne colle loro o bellezze attraenti, o necessità costringenti e penose fino la certezza della morte, ma più di tutto la memoria della gloria”.<sup>699</sup> Solomos’ views were connected to Schiller’s philosophy of German idealism.<sup>700</sup> The characters confront a series of predicaments and as they overcome them they exhibit an ethical endurance and emerge as spiritual winners. In his notes Solomos states: “Bisogna nel poema del Dovere prolungare la lunga e terribile agonia della sventura e degli affanni, perché a traverso si manifesti intatto e santo il paradiso intellettuale e morale”.<sup>701</sup>

The physical and spiritual hardships that the characters face in *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* and *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι* are presented as temptations against their duty. The female characters function as temptations in the two texts. In the novel Magdalene is depicted as the personification of temptation against the spiritual duty of Jesus. The rabbi urges people to look at the sky and to try to see the angels of God so as to avoid seeing Magdalene: “-Ανοίχτε τα μάτια της ψυχής, φώναζε, κοιτάχτε τον ουρανό· στέκεται από πάνω μας ο Θεός, σκίστηκε ο ουρανός, πρόβαλαν οι στρατιές των αγγέλων, γέμισε ο αγέρας κόκκινες και γαλάζιες φτερούγες!”.<sup>702</sup> The expression “ανοίχτε τα μάτια της ψυχής” evokes the second draft of *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι*:

Έστρωσ’ εδέχθ’ η θάλασσα άντρες ριποκινδύνους,

Κι’ εδέχθηκε στα βάθη τους τον ουρανό κι’ εκείνους.

<sup>699</sup> Solomos 1999: 34, 36.

<sup>700</sup> See Kapsomenos 1992: 71-79.

<sup>701</sup> Solomos 1999: 26.

<sup>702</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 44.

Πάντ' ανοιχτά, πάντ' άγρυπνα, τα μάτια της ψυχής μου.<sup>703</sup>

Another factor that is perceived as temptation in the two works is nature. In *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι* nature constitutes a temptation that may weaken the spirit of the besieged who have decided to sacrifice their life: “Το Μεσολόγγι έπεσε την άνοιξη· ο ποιητής παρασταίνει την Φύση, εις τη στιγμή που είναι ωραιότερη, ως μία δύναμη, η οποία, με όλα τ' άλλα και υλικά και ηθικά ενάντια, προσπαθεί να δειλιάση τους πολιορκημένους”.<sup>704</sup> In the second draft of *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι* there is a personification of April and Eros who are dancing signaling that nature is not what it appears but a concealed force to undermine the soul's alertness.<sup>705</sup> Nature threatens the besieged through hunger and desire. In *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* Jesus also perceives nature as a temptation. As the narrator explains: “Ήταν το χνότο του πειρασμού όλες ετούτες οι ανοιξιάτικες μυρωδιές”.<sup>706</sup> The odour of nature during spring to which the narrator refers evokes the part of *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι* which describes the exemplary endurance of women against the tempting smells of nature and food:

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<sup>703</sup> Solomos 1961: 234.

<sup>704</sup> Solomos 1961: 216.

<sup>705</sup> See Mackridge 1989: 92.

<sup>706</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 361.

Απόψε, ενώ είχαν τα παράθυρα ανοιχτά για τη δροσιά, μία απ' αυτές, η νεώτερη, επήγε να τα κλείσει, αλλά μια άλλη της είπε: «Όχι, παιδί μου' άφησε νάμπη η μυρωδιά από τα φαγητά' είναι χρεία να συνηθίσουμε' μεγάλο πράμα η υπομονή! Αχ! μας την έπεμψε ο Θεός' κλει θησαυρούς κι' εκείνη. Εμείς πρέπει να έχουμε υπομονή, αν και έρχονταν οι μυρωδιές. Απ' όσα δίν' η θάλασσα, απ' όσα η γη, ο αέρας». Κι' έτσι λέγοντας εματάνοιζε το παράθυρο, και η πολλή μυρωδιά των αρωμάτων εχυνότουν μέσα κι' εγιόμισε το δωμάτιο. Και η πρώτη είπε: «Και το αεράκι μας πολεμάει».<sup>707</sup>

Το σπίτι μύριζε ψάρι και δεντρολίβανο' το παράθυρο της αυλής ήταν ανοιχτό, κάπου εκεί κοντά θα 'χαν ανθίσει μουσμουλιές κι έρχονταν με το νυχτερινό αγεράκι η μυρωδιά τους, γλυκιά και πιπεράτη. Ο Ιησούς σηκώθηκε, έκλεισε το παράθυρο' ήταν το χνότο του πειρασμού όλες ετούτες οι ανοιξιάτικες μυρωδιές, δεν ήταν ο αέρας της ψυχής του' καιρός να φύγει, να μπει στον αέρα που του ταίριαζε, ο Θεός βιάζονταν.<sup>708</sup>

<sup>707</sup> Solomos 1961: 225. My underline.

<sup>708</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 361. My underline.

The words *παράθυρο, ανοιχτό, έρχουνταν, μυρωδιά, έκλεισε, αγέρας, ο Θεός* are verbal parallels that link the two passages. In both cases the smells that penetrate into the room through the open window function as temptations that challenge the endurance of the besieged and Jesus. In *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι* despite the scarcity of food due to the city's siege the women patiently sense the smell of food that is coming from the open window. They decide to leave the window open so as to confront directly the temptation. On the contrary Jesus, who is found in a house that has sufficient food (“το σπίτι μύριζε ψάρι και δεντρολίβανο”), hustles to close the window so as to avoid the smell of nature which he perceives as a temptation. Although he is depicted in a more privileged position than the women, he does not confront the temptation but escapes from it.

The section “Ο Πειρασμός” of *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι* begins with a metaphorical kind of fainting (“Ανάκουστος κιλαϊδισμός και λιποθυμισμένος”)<sup>709</sup> and the last temptation of Kazantzakis' novel begins with a literal one, namely the fainting of Jesus on the cross (“και λιποθύμισε”<sup>710</sup>). The narration focuses on Simon who is in emotional turmoil and pain as he watches Jesus (“Και τότε, μεγαλύτερο τρόμο, μεγαλύτερο πόνο δεν ένιωσε”<sup>711</sup>) and at this point the dream of the temptation commences. The adverb “τότε” as well as the representation of the emotional and physical pain of the spectator evoke the beginning of *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι*: “Τότες εταραχήκανε τα σωθικά μου και έλεγα πως ήρθε η ώρα να ξεψυχήσω”.<sup>712</sup> The narrator of *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* then proceeds to the description of the new surroundings that Jesus observes: “Έπαιξαν τα βλέφαρά του αναγαλλιάζοντας, ξαφνιασμένα· δεν ήτανε τούτος σταυρός, ήταν ένα θεόρατο δέντρο, από τη γης στον

<sup>709</sup> Solomos 1961: 243.

<sup>710</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 452.

<sup>711</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 452.

<sup>712</sup> Solomos 1961: 211.

ουρανό, κι ήταν άνοιξη και το δέντρο έρριζα είχε ανθίσει”.<sup>713</sup> The reference to the vision of Jesus and the transition to a new environment where nature prevails recall the beginning of *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι* where the poet also refers to his vision and the transformation of the environment in which he is found: “Αλλά δεν έβλεπα μήτε το κάστρο, μήτε το στρατόπεδο”, “Έκατασκέπαζε όλα τα πάντα μαυρίλα και πίσσα, γιομάτη λάμψη, βροντή και αστροπελέκι”.<sup>714</sup>

The first figure that the poet sees is a woman with supernatural characteristics (“Και ιδού μες στην καπνίλα μια μεγάλη γυναίκα με φόρεμα μαύρο σαν του λαγού το αίμα, όπου η σπίθα έγγιζε κι εσβενότουνε”).<sup>715</sup> In Jesus’ dream the first figure that appears to him is also a supernatural figure, namely an angel: “[...] άξαφνα στρουφογύρισε, έπηξε ο αγέρας –κι ένας άγγελος στάθηκε μπροστά του. Τη στιγμή εκείνη ξημέρωνε”.<sup>716</sup> The angel is the figure that accompanies Jesus throughout the dream. He protects Jesus with his wings: “Ξεδίπλωσε χαμογελώντας ο Άγγελος τη μια του φτερούγα, είχε αρχίσει να πέφτει μαζί με τη νύχτα και παγωνιά πολλή, και περιτύλιξε με τα πράσινα πυκνά φτερά του τον Ιησού να μην κρυώνει”.<sup>717</sup> The wings of the angel are a factor that makes Jesus trust the angel: “Έχω εμπιστοσύνη σε σένα: οι φτερούγες σου είναι πράσινες σαν το χορτάρι της γης”.<sup>718</sup> In “Ο Πειρασμός” of *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι* a girl also sees an angel in her dream before her death who gives her his wings. However, it is only in the dream that the angel and his gifts are found. In *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι* the girl asks: “Άγγελε μόνον στ’ όνειρο μου δίνεις τα φτερά σου;”<sup>719</sup> and in *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* Jesus asks if it’s a dream: “-

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<sup>713</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 453.

<sup>714</sup> Solomos 1961: 211.

<sup>715</sup> Solomos 1961: 211.

<sup>716</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 453.

<sup>717</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 467.

<sup>718</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 464.

<sup>719</sup> Solomos 1961: 246.

Όνειρο; Έκαμε. –Ναι, ραβή μου, όνειρο όλα ετούτα [...] Τα ’πλασε ο Πειρασμός να μας πλανέσει”.<sup>720</sup> The word *πειρασμός* is also a marker that shows the connection of the novel with Solomos’ “Ο Πειρασμός”.

As Jesus can see angels and supernatural figures he is characterised with the adjective *αλαφροϊσκιωτος* several times in the novel.<sup>721</sup> The word *αλαφροϊσκιωτος* refers to a person with visionary powers. It is also found in the short story of Papadiamandis “Το άνθος του γυαλού” as well as in Sikelianos’ poem *Αλαφροϊσκιωτος* (1909). In the third draft of *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι* an *αλαφροϊσκιωτος* is asked by the narrator to convey his visions: “Αλαφροϊσκιωτε καλέ για πες απόψε τι δεξ” (3.6.14). In *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* the word is usually used with negative connotations. For instance, in the dream Jesus is called *αλαφροϊσκιωτος* by the angel who attempts to undermine Jesus’ point of view.<sup>722</sup>

Although the vision of the last temptation portrays a long period of Jesus’ life until he grows old, it only lasts momentarily: “Μια αστραπή, τη στιγμή που φώναζε «Ηλί! Ηλί» και λιποθύμησε, τον άρπαξε ο Πειρασμός και τον πλάνεσε”.<sup>723</sup> The vision that a man sees as an epiphany during the last moment before he dies is a distinctive characteristic that is found in the poetry of Solomos. In *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι* the soldier dreams of the dead girl before losing his own life in the battle:

Η κορασιά τρεμάμενη...

Χαρά της έσβηγε τη φωνή πουν’ τώρα αποσβημένη.

Άμε, χρυσ’ όνειρο, και συ με τη σαβανωμένη.

Εδώ ’ναι χρεία να κατεβώ, να σφίξω το σπαθί μου,

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<sup>720</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 479.

<sup>721</sup> For instance see Kazantzakis 1984: 25, 249, 358, 362, 495.

<sup>722</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 495.

<sup>723</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 507.

Πριν όλοι χάσουν τη ζωή, κι' εγ' όλη την πνοή μου.<sup>724</sup>

An analogous moment is found in Solomos' poem *Πόρφυρας*. The poem recounts the killing of an English soldier by a shark while he was swimming at the port of Corfu. Before his death the man experiences a moment of epiphany through which he reaches a state of self-awareness:

Πριν πάψ' η μεγαλόψυχη πνοή χαρά γεμίζει.

Άστραψε φως κι εγνώρισεν ο νιος τον εαυτό του.<sup>725</sup>

In the second draft of *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι* a soldier sees the dream of his beloved but he tries to overcome the past happiness and dedicate himself to the present. After experiencing the dream of the last temptation Jesus has evolved spiritually. Like the besieged of Mesolongi, Jesus prepares for death not only with spiritual strength but also with happiness. In both works the word *χαρά* is used in order to describe the emotions of the characters before dying. In *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι* a woman's blissful feelings stem from the anticipation of death as a kind of salvation: "Μια των γυναικών προσφεύγει εις το στοχασμό του θανάτου ως μόνη σωτηρία της με τη χαρά την οποίαν αισθάνεται το πουλάκι".<sup>726</sup> Jesus feels happiness after the last temptation as he realises that he did not diverge from his duty and he is on the cross: "Τίναξε το κεφάλι, κι ολομεμιάς θυμήθηκε που βρίσκουνταν, ποιος ήταν και γιατί πονούσε' άγρια αδάμαστη χαρά τον συνεπήρε".<sup>727</sup>

During the death of Jesus and the besieged a gloomy atmosphere is conveyed by the natural environment. The sound of the hammers is first heard and then the sun darkens as Jesus is crucified: "Κι ως σήκωσαν τα σφυριά κι ακούστηκε ο πρώτος

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<sup>724</sup> Solomos 1961: 223.

<sup>725</sup> Solomos 1961: 255.

<sup>726</sup> Solomos 1961: 248.

<sup>727</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 506.

χτύπος, ο ήλιος έκρυψε το πρόσωπό του· κι ως ακούστηκε ο δεύτερος, σκοτείνιασε ο ουρανός και φάνηκαν τ' άστρα· δεν ήταν άστρα, ήταν δάκρυα χοντρά, κι έσταζαν απάνω στα χώματα”.<sup>728</sup> Similarly, in Solomos' poem after the reference to the guns and the Turkish swords, there is the image of the sun that suddenly darkens:

Τουφέκια τούρκικα σπαθιά!

Το ξεροκάλαμο περνά.

Σαν ήλιος όπου ξάφνου σκει πυκνά και μαύρα νέφη,

Τ' όρος βαρεί κατάραχα και σπίτια ιδές στη χλόη.<sup>729</sup>

The two passages allude to Luke's gospel where the death of Jesus is followed by the darkening of the sun and the cracking of the temple's dome (Luke 23. 44-46). Through this connection the ending of *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* and *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι* conveys a biblical character that reflects the participation of nature in the death of the characters.

## Conclusions

In this chapter we examined the connections of *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* with the Modern Greek tradition. Themes that the novel develops have been explored in earlier works of the Greek cultural tradition and the novel seems to expand them but at the same time it adds new twists to the previous works. The novel mainly explores the gradual progress of Jesus towards crucifixion, something that demands from him to display enormous spiritual strength. The temptations of Jesus in the novel are linked with those of the besieged who overcome them so as to emerge as spiritual

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<sup>728</sup> Kazantzakis 1984: 451.

<sup>729</sup> Solomos 1961: 250.



winners in Solomos' poem. Jesus during the temptation seems to lose the spiritual strength that he had previously acquired but it becomes evident that after it he is ready to proceed to his calling of crucifixion.

The miracles of Jesus are included but they are questioned as Lazarus who is resurrected by Jesus is presented as a *βρικόλακας*. The Greek folk and literary tradition includes references to these figures but the ingenuity of the novel lies on the connection of the afterlife of *βρικόλακες* with the resurrection of Lazarus. The human side of biblical characters has been explored in the folk tradition and also in Varnalis' work. The figure of Jesus had been developed in Greek folk songs which show in their turn convergences and divergences from the treatment of Jesus in the ancient gospels. Kazantzakis' novel expands these features that stem from the folk tradition and introduces new aspects according to the ideological orientation of the novel. Overall, there is a juxtaposition of convergences to the tradition and divergences from it through the introduction of innovations in *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός*. It can be said that the description of the last temptation in the final chapters and its subsequent denial also encapsulates the intertextual technique of the novel regarding the story already told and its contradiction.

## Conclusions

In the preceding chapters we examined the use and function of the connections of the novels of Kazantzakis' maturity to the Modern Greek literary tradition. In the first chapter we explored the sources that reveal Kazantzakis' activity as a reader of Modern Greek literature in order to detect the engagement of the author with the literary tradition. He was familiar with the works of the Modern Greek literary tradition and contemporary literature and he expressed his views regarding them in letters, essays and interviews. Despite the author's long sojourns abroad he made conscious efforts to follow the contemporary literary production of Greece so as to be aware of the place of his own work within it.

In chapters two to five we investigated the relation of Kazantzakis' major novels to Modern Greek literature. Works and authors that Kazantzakis praised in his essays and interviews are mainly those with which his novels interact more extensively. There are texts, periods, and authors that have a more frequent presence in his fiction such as the folk songs and the poems of Solomos. On the contrary, the novels of Kazantzakis' maturity do not bear extensive connections with works that he had criticised in his essays. For instance, his novels are not in general linked with the literary works that were written in katharevousa since Kazantzakis was a fervent supporter of the demotic language.

It might be said that *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* and *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* have a broader and denser connection with Modern Greek literature in comparison with the novels that develop Christian themes (*Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται*, *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός*). In the first two novels Kazantzakis

creates the entire story line while in the other two he reworks the Christian myth. In *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* the events of the story mainly follow the success of events in the life of Jesus as it is recounted in the *New Testament* which is the hypotext of the novel but at the same time his intertextual practices have a revisionary nature that show ingenuity. *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* also bears parallels with the events of Jesus' life and the resourcefulness in the technique of the novel is detected in its relation to works that reflect repetition as opposed to renovation.

The Modern Greek works that were examined in this thesis in relation to Kazantzakis' novels belong to a variety of genres. They are poems, novels, novellas as well as dramas. The novels are linked with texts that belong to a wide range of genres reflecting a generic polyphony. Moreover, they are connected with works that have a wide chronological spectrum. They range from the tradition of the Greek folk songs of the fall of Constantinople to literature that was contemporary with the novels. In *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* there are quotations from folk songs (κλέφτικα and “Του νεκρού αδελφού”) and also allusions to Myrivilis' *Ο Βασίλης ο Αρβανίτης* whose third version was published in 1943 while Kazantzakis was writing the novel. *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* is connected with works that range from the folk songs of the fall of Constantinople until Sikelianos' *Ο Χριστός στη Ρώμη* that was published in 1946. Similarly, *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* comprises quotations and allusions to Greek folk songs and also Marandis' *Στο Κάστρο* (1946). *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* reworks the tradition of folk poetry such as “Της Αγιά Σοφιάς” and “Του Γιοφυριού της Άρτας” and also the social and religious themes that had been developed in Varnalis' *Το φως που καίει*. The literary effect of the combination of the older and the most recent Modern Greek literary intertexts is that the historical novels of

Kazantzakis assimilate diachronic and contemporary elements in their content and style.

Pivotal moments of Greek history from the fall of Constantinople, the Ottoman occupation of Crete, and the Greek war of independence are reflected through the connections with the literary tradition. The Modern Greek intertexts constitute the basis on which Kazantzakis builds the image of Greece and its people in *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά*, which is set in Crete after its union with Greece, in *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης*, which depicts Crete towards the end of the Ottoman occupation, and *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται*, which is set in a fictional Greek village of Anatolia shortly before the Asia Minor catastrophe. Although *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* is set in ancient Judaea, the narration maintains a distinctive Modern Greek character that is supported by its intertextual linking with the Greek folk poetry and the work of Solomos.

The presence of textual material from previous literature in the novels can be detected in the form of quotations, allusions and references. In many cases the characters quote textual segments from previous literature as for instance from Greek folk poetry, *Ερωτόκριτος* as well as Solomos' *Ύμνος εις την ελευθερίαν*. Generally speaking, there is compatibility between the cultural background of the characters and the kind of works that they quote. This correspondence gives verisimilitude to the characters. The references and allusions to Modern Greek literature are mostly detected in the words of the narrators. The characters seem to participate unconsciously in the allusions that are made to previous literary texts. In most cases the allusions are implicit yet a series of intertextual markers that indicate connections with earlier works is employed in the novels. Below our conclusions about the most

characteristic ways through which the intertextual relation to previous literature appears in Kazantzakis' novels are summarised.

The titles of Kazantzakis' novels often indicate their intertextual background as they allude to titles of previous literary texts. The title *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* has a dense intertextual nature that encompasses the ancient Greek, the Byzantine as well as the Modern Greek literary tradition with which the novel converses. The title explicitly evokes Plato's *Πολιτεία*, the Byzantine narratives about the lives of saints and also Prevelakis' novella *Το Χρονικό μιας Πολιτείας*.<sup>730</sup> The title *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* reproduces the first part of the title of a main intertext of the novel, namely Sikelianos' *Ο Χριστός στη Ρώμη*. From this perspective the verb "ξανασταυρώνεται" can be read as an indication of the reworking of the theme of crucifixion which had also been developed in Sikelianos' play. Moreover, the titles *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης (Ελευτερία ή Θάνατος)* and *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* include characteristic words that are also found in titles of Solomos' poems to which the two novels allude, namely *Ύμνος εις την ελευθερίαν* and "Ο Πειρασμός" from *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι* respectively. Hence, the titles of Kazantzakis' novels do not only encapsulate the theme that the stories recount but also the literary tradition in which they are placed.

Moreover, there are characters in Kazantzakis' novels that bear names which connect them with fictional characters from the literary tradition. This feature can be observed in the main as well as the secondary characters. In *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* the name of the protagonist, Manolios, has the name of the protagonist of Kondylakis' novella *Ο Πατούχας*. In *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* the Cretan shepherd Charidimos has the name of the Cretan warrior in Kornaros' *Ερωτόκριτος*.

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<sup>730</sup> See Beaton 2009: 42-43.

In the same novel Paraskevas, who saves the young girl from the attack of Thrasaki and his friends, has the name of the narrator of Kosmas Politis' *Eroica*. The incorporation of the name of Paraskevas continues the intertextual parallels established in *Eroica* between the name of the narrator, Paraskevas, which is also the name of the author, Paris Taveloudis, and the character in Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* to which both novels refer.

A category of characters in Kazantzakis' novels is historical persons that are identifiable through their surnames. The stories of these characters originate from real persons yet as they are transferred into the narration they are intertextually linked with Modern Greek literary works. For instance, the character of Alexis Zorbas stems from Kazantzakis' memories of his friend Giorgis Zorbas. As the plot of the novel unfolds Zorbas' actions and words extensively allude to the character of Vasilis Arvanitis as he is depicted in Myrivilis' novella that also recounts the actions of a character that had been a historical person named Stratis Arvanitis. Similarly, Stavridakis was a historical person that had been a close friend of Kazantzakis. In the unfolding of the plot he is linked with Kostandis as he is depicted in the Greek folk poetry. Moreover, the novels include historical persons that had been presented before in previous literary texts. Madame Hortense was a character that appeared in Prevelakis' *To Χρονικό μιας Πολιτείας* and Efendina that is found in *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* was included in Marandis' *Στο Κάστρο*. In Marandis' novella we also find direct references to the intellectual activity of Kazantzakis himself in Heraklion at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The role and actions of the characters as well as the relationships that they develop with other characters in the text in many cases reproduce analogous features of fictional antecedents from previous literature. For instance, in *Βίος και Πολιτεία*

του Αλέξη Ζορμπά the narrator recounts the events that he experienced. In his text he links himself with previous storytellers from Modern Greek literature such as the grandfather in Vizyinos' short story *Το μόνον της ζωής του ταξείδιον*, the narrator of Kosmas Politis' *Λεμονοδάσος*, and the narrator in Myrivilis' *Ο Βασίλης ο Αρβανίτης*. Through the writing of the story in which he participated but also through the intertextual linking of himself with previous storytellers of Modern Greek literature his bookish nature is emphasised. In *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* the role of Lazarus as the brother of Martha and Maria who returns to life after his death reproduces the role of Kostandis in folk poetry. In *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* the role of the eponymous hero among the society of Megalo Kastro and the passion that he develops for the Ottoman Emine although he is an Orthodox corresponds with the role of Nikos in the same town as an Orthodox who challenges its social conventions through his relationship with an Ottoman woman. Hence the role of a character and the relations that unite him with other characters of the story indicate his linking with figures from previous texts with whom he shares the same role, age, religion or social status.

Moreover, Kazantzakis' novels are connected with the Modern Greek literary tradition through the assimilation of distinctive symbols and images that are found in the previous texts. In *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* the image of the dance of Zorbas as well as the function of the musical instrument *σαντούρι* as a symbol of freedom evoke the image of the dance and the function of the instruments *νταούλι* and *ζουρνάς* in Myrivilis' *Ο Βασίλης ο Αρβανίτης*. In *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* the children's helmets are a symbol of heroism that reproduces the use of the helmet in *Eroica* as a symbol of heroism for the children. In *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* and *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι* the window functions as a symbol that shows the endurance of the

characters. Whereas in Solomos' poem the women leave it open so as to confront the tempting odors of spring and the food, Jesus closes it so as to avoid them.

In many cases the intertextual relationship is fashioned upon the thematic affinity between the novel and the former text. In *Βίος και Πολιτεία του Αλέξη Ζορμπά* which mainly recounts the story of Zorbas who comes across as unconventional, free and brave we detect a number of intertexts that also recount the life and actions of brave men from the Modern Greek literary tradition: Digenis Akritis, Vasilis Arvanitis and Mitros Roumeliotis. *Ο Χριστός Ξανασταυρώνεται* which develops the Christian myth in modern times includes the folk songs of the fall of Constantinople as well as Sikelianos' *Ο Χριστός στη Ρώμη* where the appropriation of Christian themes is presented from the perspective of communist ideology. Moreover, *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης* that provides a literary panorama of Megalo Kastro is intertextually linked with Marandis' *Στο Κάστρο* where the narration focuses on the city that is described. A thematic affinity between the novel and the former literary texts is also detected in *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός*. As the novel depicts Jesus' human nature it is associated with Varnalis' *Το φως που καίει* as well as Renan's *Vie de Jésus*.

We may now return to the research questions that were addressed in the introduction: what is the position of Kazantzakis' novels in the history of Modern Greek literature? What are the main intertextual techniques that are used in the novels and how does the detection of the intertexts form their interpretation? It can be argued that Kazantzakis' novels would not have existed as they are without the former basis of the Greek folk poetry, the literature of the Cretan renaissance, the poetry of Solomos, Greek ethnography, the work of Sikelianos and the fiction that was cultivated in the 1930s and 1940s.



The intertextual relationship is first recognised by the reader through common elements in the language, content, structure or style. The text may finally converge with the intertext or on the contrary introduce an alteration. Moreover, the function of the intertext in the novel may either be to support the words and actions of the character or to undermine them. *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* is connected with Solomos' *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι* in terms of the confrontation of the protagonist with the temptations. The correspondences stress the cowardice that Jesus exhibits in comparison with the brave women in *Οι Ελεύθεροι Πολιορκημένοι*. In *Ο Τελευταίος Πειρασμός* the correspondences illustrate Jesus' fearfulness. In *Ο Καπετάν Μιχάλης*, however, the thematic affinity with Solomos' *Ύμνος εις την ελευθερίαν* enhances the depiction of the Cretans as brave warriors and offers an archetypically heroic dimension to them.

The detection of the intertextual relationship with Modern Greek literature affects the interpretation of the novels. The texts are enriched since behind the characters are reflected figures from previous works. As the characters are related not only with the other characters within the story but also with characters from former texts their features acquire a new light through comparison with them. Fictional and historical figures of the Modern Greek cultural tradition such as Digenis Akritis, Charos, Kostandis, Rotokritos, Charidimos, Patouchas, Vasilis Arvanitis constitute the archetypical characters from Modern Greek culture that are echoed behind Zorbas, kapetan Michalis, kapetan Siphakas and Manolios. Kazantzakis' novels are a crucial part of the history of Modern Greek literature and it is also the Modern Greek literary tradition that is a fundamental component of his novels. The Modern Greek works that are connected with Kazantzakis' novels convey a rich cultural material such as

the language, myths and archetypes that stem from the Modern Greek literary and cultural tradition as the novels creatively rework them and shed fresh light upon them.

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